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BISMARCK AT HOME AND IN PRIVATE LIFE.

THE Ministers of Louis le Grand were one day kept waiting a couple of hours in the ante-chamber, their royal master having very important business in hand, which important business consisted, as it afterwards transpired, in teaching his little dog to stand on his hind-legs and beg ! It is quite refreshing to hear of such occurrences ; to find that kings do not always wear their crowns and regal robes ; and statesmen are not for ever concocting protocols, drawing up despatches, or practising diplomatic jugglery. A Swiss cotton-spinner, born in penury, when he had acquired great wealth, and was brought in contact with persons far above him in birth and station, overcame his native shyness in his intercourse with them by fancying he saw them standing naked before him. He had learned, as all thinking men do learn, that a great deal of the oppressiveness of human grandeur is due to externals : remove them, and what remains even of *majesty* but a *jest*. Therefore we like to catch the high and mighty ones, if not exactly as the Swiss manufacturer

represented them to his imagination, at least in dressing-gown and slippers. And if then they maintain a presentable appearance, it is a proof that there is good stuff in them, and that they owe their imposing looks not altogether to the buckram and rouge of official station and social obsequiousness. Nay, it is then only that we can discover in them noble qualities of heart and mind, which in their general dealings with the world they find it expedient to hide under the glittering varnish of diplomatic coldness and *hauteur*. And thus, whilst we are not led to esteem them less—for it is only the valet, because he is a valet, who cannot see a hero in his master—we learn to love them more.

The above reflections have been called up in us by the perusal of a collection of private letters written at different times by Prince Bismarck to his wife, sister, and other persons, and recently published in Germany. In this correspondence, which includes the period from 1844 to 1870, we behold the Prince from a standpoint diametrically opposed to the one from

which the world has been taught to look at him. In the first letter of the series, which is addressed to his only sister Malwine, afterwards Countess of Arnim, he writes :

' I have just received your boots, and while they are being packed up I write to let you know that I am well. . . . If the boots don't fit, I am very sorry for it; you did not say how they were to be made, so I had them made just like the old ones.'

Here is condescension on the part of a man destined to play an important character in the world's drama, to trouble his head about so paltry a matter as a pair of lady's shoes! Whether he foresaw his destiny indeed is doubtful, for another letter to his sister, written in 1846, ends with the following passage :

' Bernhard [his elder brother] advises me to go to Prussia. I should like to know what he really means. He insists that, by inclination and temperament, I am cut out for political life, and that sooner or later I should adopt it.'

He seems, in fact, when young, not to have had much inclination to be a servant of the State.

Again, he writes to his sister on one occasion :

' I am thoroughly tired of acting the *Landrat*. . . . Now I have scarcely had a week's rest, and must again serve my country as a soldier. You see "how men of merit are sought after, the undeserving may," &c.'

The words between inverted commas he quotes in English, in which language he early became proficient, and scraps of which he frequently liked to quote.

To give another instance : in a letter to his wife, written from Ofen, after mentioning that there was not a single Englishman on board the Danube steamer—the

English, apparently, have not yet discovered Hungary, he adds :

' I am getting impatient at Hildebrand's [his servant] delay, for I am longing for a "clean shirt."

And he concludes the letter :

' Whence have I got the song that has been running in my head all day long : Over the blue mountain, over the white sea-foam, come, thou beloved one, come to thy lonely home! Some one must have sung it to me in "old lang syne."

While Bismarck was *Landrat* of the circle of Naugard he chiefly resided at Kniephof, a knightly estate in Pomerania, which, together with the estate of Jarchelin, had been assigned to him when, in 1841, a division of the paternal estates took place. His elder brother, Bernhard von Bismarck, retained the estate of Külz. But after the death of the elder Bismarck, in November 1845, the sons so divided the property that the elder retained Külz and received Jarchelin, whilst the younger retained Kniephof and added to it Schönhausen, which latter estate had come into the family in a peculiar manner. Up to the middle of the sixteenth century the Bismarcks had resided at the castle of Burgstall, on the southern frontier of the Alt-Mark towards Magdeburg. They were renowned not only as valiant soldiers, but as eager sportsmen; and their preserves, which were not only the most considerable, but also the best stocked in the Marks, were so fully appreciated by the Electoral Prince, the Margrave John George, that they found themselves obliged to assent to an exchange of estates: the representatives of the then elder race of the Bismarcks accepted the Abbey of Coevese, and the representatives of the younger race accepted Schönhausen and Fisch-

beck. But though the family had thus lost their famous preserves, they remained keen sportmen for all that ; and the passion for the pursuit has descended to the present Prince-Minister. His private correspondence abounds with references to, and records of, his sporting exploits, which, to him, sometimes wear a comical aspect.

Thus, in a letter to his sister, shortly after her marriage with Count Arnim, he says :

' After your departure I naturally found the house very dull, and, sitting down by the fire, I smoked and thought how unnatural and selfish it is when girls that have brothers, and especially single ones, get married, and act as if they alone were in the world, in order to gratify their romantic notions—a selfishness from which I know our sex, and myself in particular, to be free. . . . I live with father; reading, smoking, taking walks, and occasionally assisting him in playing a farce, which he is pleased to call "hunting the fox." When it is raining fast, or, as just now, freezing hard, we, accompanied by Ihle, Selim, and Charles, go out, and with all the care of thoroughbred sportmen, closely watching the direction of the wind, stand round a clump of fir-trees ; all of us, father probably included, fully convinced that, except a few old women picking up sticks, there is not a living being within. Then Ihle, Charles, and two dogs, uttering the most fearful howls, especially Ihle, enter the grove ; father stands motionless, his gun pointed, just as if he expected the animal, till Ihle screams close to him : "Hoo, hoo ! attention ! hah, hah !" Then father asks quite coolly whether I didn't see something ; and I reply, with well-imitated surprise, " Nothing at all !" Then, abusing the weather, we go to another clump, and

play the same farce over again. Thus we continue for three or four hours, without father and the men apparently growing less confident or eager.'

We have seen at the commencement of the letter last quoted from how the Prince declares his sex, and himself especially, to be free from any selfish thoughts of marriage. But about a year after a change seems to have come over the spirit of his dream ; for, in again writing to his sister, he says :

' I see—the deuce take me !—that I must get married. Now that father is gone, I feel lonely and forsaken, and the mild damp weather makes me languishingly amorous. Resistance is useless ; I must in the end marry — ; people will have it so ; and nothing seems more natural, as we are both left behind. She leaves me cold, it is true ; but they all do that.'

Fancy the man of iron will taking an important step because people will have it so ! However, we suppose it was merely a *façon de parler*.

When paterfamilias is bothered out of his life by his spouse, on the arrival of the holiday season, to go to the seaside, or perchance to the Rhine, 'for the good of the dear children,' and has at last to give way, though he had declared twenty times that 'this year' he could not afford it, and was determined to stay at home, let him take comfort from the fact that he suffers in good company ; that among this noble army of martyrs to petticoat tyranny may be found great men—yea, even the mighty Bismarck himself.

In 1847 he had married Johanna, only daughter of Herr von Putkammer — whether this was the lady referred to in the last letter quoted from the correspondence does not enable us to

determine—and in 1850 he writes to his sister :

' Johanna, who at the present moment reposes in the arms of Lieutenant Morpheus, has probably told you what is in store for me. The boy howling *in basso*, and the girl screaming *in alto*, the two nursemaids singing; unsavoury baby-linen and feeding-bottles all round; and I in the midst as loving pater-familias. I resisted ever so long; but as all the mothers and aunts agreed that only sea-water and sea-air could benefit poor Mary, every cold the child might have up to her seventieth year would be attributed to my avarice and paternal barbarity, had I refused.'

So, like any common *bourgeoisie*, the Count is obliged to give in. But he thinks himself dreadfully ill-used, and would fain shirk the whole thing. About a week after the date of the last letter, he writes again to his sister thus :

'I clearly perceive now that this trip will qualify me for a lunatic asylum. I see myself in the railway-carriage with the children and their infantile necessities; our fellow-travellers turn up their noses. Johanna is ashamed to give the boy the breast [a trait of primitive simplicity certainly for a countess to do so in a public railway-carriage], and he howls till he is blue in the face. . . . I went through it all last year with Mary and her screaming. Yesterday I grew so desperate at all these prospects that I determined to give up the whole journey, and I went to bed with the resolution at least to go right through without stopping anywhere. But what is one not obliged to do for the sake of peace! . . . Johanna attacked me in the middle of the night, with the youngster in her arms; and, with all the arts by which Eve tricked us out of Paradise, of course succeeded in getting my

consent to let things be done as settled at first. But I seem to myself like one to whom a great wrong is done. Next year I must surely travel with three cradles, nurses, swaddling-clothes, and spirit-lamps. I awoke at six o'clock in a mild rage, and cannot go to sleep again for the horrible travelling visions that arise before my imagination in the darkest colours. . . . And if one were paid for it; but to waste the remains of a once splendid fortune in travelling about with sucklings—I am very unfortunate!'

There, did any of our married readers ever send forth such a heart-rending wail? And the man who utters it is Prince Bismarck, Minister-President of Prussia! Marriage, certainly, seems a kind of alkahest, which can dissolve the hardest hearts and soften the fiercest characters. In Hesekiel's *Life of Bismarck* we are told that during the Count's residence at Kniephof 'his life oscillated between *ennui*, political discussions, studies in history, philosophy and theology, and eccentricity and dissipation of such a nature as to win for him from the sedate anility of Pomerania the sobriquet of "Mad Bismarck."' And here, after a few years' training in the marriage school, we find him as pliant to his wife's will as any Cheapside haberdasher may be to that of his buxom spouse. But *ce que femme veut, Dieu le veut.*

Two more extracts from these letters with reference to his domestic life, and we have done with this phase of the Prince's private correspondence.

On the 19th December 1857 he writes to his sister :

' Sans phrase, I ask you to make the following Christmas purchases for Johanna :

' Firstly, she wants an opal

heart like yours, and woman's will is her *paradise*; I will spend two hundred dollars on it. If for that money you could get a pair of earrings, each consisting of one brilliant, I should prefer them. You have some of that kind; but probably they cost more.

'Secondly, a dress, at about one hundred dollars, not more. She wants it very light, *à deux passes*, *moirée antique*, or something of that sort [a very necessary qualification; for what male creature but a man-milliner can understand these terms?]. She wants about twenty yards.

'Thirdly, if you meet with a gilt fan worth the money, and which rattles loudly, buy it; but don't give more than ten dollars: I cannot bear the things.

'Fourthly, a large warm rug to put over the knees in the carriage, with the design of a tiger and glass eyes; it may also imitate a fox or rhinoceros, or any wild beast. It won't cost more than about ten dollars.

'If you will remain a charming sister, buy all this, and send it directly by fast train.'

Just a year after, in December 1858, he addresses his sister again, writing:

'I should like to make Johanna a present of a bracelet; the kind I am thinking of is broad, smooth, coat-of-mail like, pliable, and formed of small square pieces of gold, put together in imitation of the fields of a chess-board, without jewels, pure gold, as heavy as you can get it for about two hundred dollars. If you meet with another shape, which you like better, I have every confidence in your taste. Though a thing may be in fashion, I do not on that account give it the preference; one keeps it generally longer than the fashion lasts. [He might have added, that neither is it necessarily handsome

or in good taste because it is fashionable.] Please send it to me, under cover to Court Councilor —, Prussian Embassy, with a note for me, or the old gentleman might take it for a slight attention to himself.'

The above extracts show the affectionate husband, anxious to give his wife pleasure; yet we can see that they are written by a man whose time is taken up with more important concerns, for, though written at Frankfurt, where shops are plentiful, Bismarck has neither time nor inclination to go and select the articles himself, and so he entrusts the matter to his sister.

Bismarck at that time was Prussian Ambassador to the Diet of Frankfurt. He had gone there in May 1851 as First Secretary of the Embassy, and in the August following received the rank of Ambassador. That he thought of diplomatic life appears from a letter written to his wife on the 18th of May 1851, shortly after his arrival at Frankfurt. We quote the following passages:

'Frankfurt is terribly dull. . . . Intercourse here is in reality nothing but mutual suspicious spying, as if there were anything to spy out or conceal! People trouble themselves here about paltry trifles; and these diplomats, with their pretentious dealing in trivialities, already appear to me more ridiculous than the deputy of the Second Chamber. [Bismarck in 1848 had been elected in Brandenburg as the representative of West Havelland in the Second Chamber] . . . I am making rapid progress in the art of saying nothing in many words. I write reports, covering many sheets, which read as well as leading articles; and if Manteuffel, after having read them, can say what they contain, he can do more

than I can. Every one pretends as if he thought every one else full of thoughts and plans, if he would only give utterance to them; and yet not one of us knows what is to become of Germany any more than the man in the moon. No one, not even the most malicious of sceptical democrats, knows how much charlatanism there is in our diplomatic doings here.'

Shortly after he finds it necessary to warn his wife against speaking her thoughts too unreservedly:

'Be careful,' he says, 'in your conversation, not only with X., but with every one; for you have no idea what one is exposed to when once one becomes an object of observation. Be sure that here or at Sanssouci everything you may have whispered in a bathing-machine is repeated, seasoned with *sauce piquante*. Excuse my sermonising; but after your last letter, I deem it necessary to use the diplomatic scissors.'

The shams of parliamentary life were most repugnant to Bismarck's mind, as in fact they must be to every noble and generous mind:

'The intrigues of the Chamber appear to me,' he writes on another occasion, 'exceedingly insipid and ignoble.'

And again, with reference to the German Confederation:

'I accustom myself with yawning innocence to bear all symptoms of coldness, and to allow perfect indifference to take possession of me, after being able to flatter myself that I have contributed not a little towards reducing the Confederation to the stinging conviction of its nothingness. Heine's well-known song, 'O Bund, du hund, du bist nicht gesund' ('O Confederation, thou dog, thou art not well'), will soon, by universal consent, be-

come the national hymn of Germany.'

What the 'coldness' was to which reference is made in the above extract may be inferred from a passage occurring in another letter, directed to his sister, and dated 12th November 1858. It runs as follows:

'I feel intensely delighted with the Confederation. All those gentlemen, who as late as six months ago considered my recall as the *sine qua non* of German unity, now tremble at the thought of losing me. — beckons to them as the ogre of 1848, and they are like a dovecot scenting a ferret, and trembling with fear at democracy, barricades, parliament, and —. — falls deeply moved into my arms, and says, with a convulsive squeeze of my hand, "We shall again be driven into one camp." The French, as a matter of course, and even the English, look upon us as incendiaries; and the Russians are afraid that their Emperor may be led astray by our schemes of reform. I say to them all, "Be calm, things will all come right," and have the satisfaction of their replying, "Yes, if you remained here, we should have a guarantee; but—?"'

These are pretty strong indications of Bismarck's intense disgust for political life, at least such political life as was possible in Germany before the great changes in German politics had been effected, in which changes he himself took so conspicuous a part. Throughout his correspondence we catch glimpses of his real inclinations:

'I feel actual home-sickness after the country, woods and idleness, with the necessary addition of a loving wife and pretty children.'

He writes in 1854 to his sister:

'When I hear one of these young hopefuls scream in the street, my heart is filled with pa-

ternal feelings and maxims of education.'

In 1863 he writes to his wife :

' I wish some intrigue would bring in another Ministry, so that I might honourably turn my back on this uninterrupted stream of ink and live quietly in the country. This restlessness of existence is unbearable . . . it is no life for an honest country squire, and I see a benefactor in every one who seeks to overthrow me. At the same time the flies in this room hum and tickle and sting, so that I am most anxious for a change, which, no doubt, in a few minutes a courier, laden with fifty insipid despatches, will bring me.'

In a letter from which we have already quoted (12th Nov. 1858) occurs the following passage :

' If they want to dispose of me merely for the sake of pleasing place-hunters, I shall shelter myself behind the cannon of Schönhausen, and look on how they rule Prussia supported by the majorities of the Left. . . . As soon as I shall find the characters of gentleman [Bismarck uses the English term] and diplomatist no longer compatible, the pleasure or the burden of spending a large salary with dignity will not for a moment render my choice doubtful. I have enough to live according to my requirements, and if God preserve my wife and children in health, I say, *Vogue la galère*, in whatever current it may be. Thirty years hence it will probably be the same to me, whether now I act the diplomatist or the country gentleman ; and hitherto the prospect of a bold honest struggle without being hampered by any official position has almost as great a charm for me as the expectation of a continuous *régime* of truffles, despatches, and grand crosses.'

Bismarck was recalled from the Frankfurt Mission in 1859, and

sent as Prussian Ambassador to the court of St. Petersburg. In a letter, dated from that capital and addressed to Count Schleinitz, he reviews his eight years' official life and policy at Frankfurt. He therein insists on a revision of the Federal pact which should secure to Prussia its due weight and influence in the Confederation.

' I believe,' he says, ' we ought gladly to take up the glove, and not look upon it as a misfortune, but as an advance of the crisis towards improvement, if a majority at Frankfurt should come to a resolution, in which we can see an overstepping of their competence ; an arbitrary alteration of the purpose of the Confederation ; a breach of the Federal pact. The more unequivocally the violation displays itself, the better. We shall not so easily again find the conditions as favourable as they now are in Austria, France, and Russia to improve our position in Germany, and our Confederates are in a fair way to offer us just cause and opportunity without our being obliged to further their arrogance.' He then advert's to the overwhelming influence which Austria has obtained in Germany by bribing the press of that country. ' Scarcely one Prussian paper,' he writes, ' dare give expression to Prussian patriotism. . . . I believe a great change might be produced in public opinion if we were to strike the chord of an independent policy. . . . Only then I should like to see the word " German" instead of " Prussian" inscribed on our standard, when we should have become more closely and effectively united with the rest of our countrymen than we are now. . . . I see in our connection with the Confederation a disease, which sooner or later we shall have to cure *ferro et igni*.'

At that time indeed German

unity seemed as far off as ever ; the smaller Governments had recovered from the shock they had experienced by the events of 1848, and the Confederation was entirely under the patronage, or rather control, of Austria, as Bismarck's letters sufficiently indicate. But how many years before events actually came to pass they were foreseen by that astute politician is shown by a passage in a letter to his wife, written at St. Petersburg in 1859 :

' Half an hour ago,' he says, ' a courier awoke me with war and peace. Our policy is gliding more and more into the Austrian dead-water, and when once we have fired a shot on the Rhine it is all over with the Austro-Italian War, and in its stead a Franco-Prussian one appears on the stage. . . . As God wills ! All things here below are but a question of time ; nations and men, folly and wisdom, peace and war, they come and go like waves, but the sea remains. There is nothing on this earth but hypocrisy and jugglery, and whether a fever or a bullet tear off this mask of flesh, go it must sooner or later, and then there will be between Prussian and Austrian, if they are both of the same stature, such a likeness as to render it difficult to distinguish them ; fools and sages look pretty much alike when they are reduced to skeletons.'

When the Prince philosophises it is generally in a desponding strain ; the above is an instance ; here is another taken from a letter to his wife, written in 1851 :

' The day before yesterday I paid a visit to Wiesbaden, and looked with mingled feelings of sadness and precocious wisdom at the scenes of former folly. . . . Where and how may — and Miss — be living ; how many are buried of those with whom I then drank,

dined, and to whom I made love ? How many changes have my views of life undergone in those fourteen years ; how much now appears little that then appeared great, how much venerable which then I scoffed at ! How many leaves may yet come forth in our inner man, afford shade, rustle and wither away, till another fourteen years shall have passed away, till 1865, if we live till then ! It is incomprehensible to me how a man, who thinks, and yet does, or will, not know anything of God, with the contempt and *ennui* with which he must look upon life, can bear to live on. I know not how I formerly bore it. Were I now compelled to live, as formerly, without you, without children, I know not why I should not put away this life like a soiled shirt ; and yet most of my acquaintances are and live thus. If I ask one of them what reason he can have for living on, for toiling and vexing himself, for intriguing and spying, he cannot tell me.'

In this letter also the statesman and politician gives utterance to his love of home, and longings for ' forest, sea, desert, you and the children, all blended with sunset and Beethoven. Instead of that, I am compelled to visit tedious people, and read endless statistics of German steam corvets and gun-boats, rotting away at Bremer-hafen, and eating money.' From this last incidental remark it would seem that there is waste in German governmental dockyards as well as in our own.

The letters, as we have seen, show us the writer in all his different moods,—now confident, now desponding ; now anxious for the retirement and quiet of the country, now disporting himself amidst the stormy waves of his checkered career. A few more quotations of

the kind may be given. In 1862 he wrote to his sister :

' Did I still wish to make a name, it would, perhaps, be as well that much harm should be said of me.... But it is now too late, and I continue to do my duty in a dull homely way. Since my illness I have become mentally so weak as to lack strength for stirring times. Three years ago I might as yet have formed a useful minister; now I appear to myself like a sick circus-rider. Yet I must continue a few years longer in office, if I can stand it.'

Compare these words of weariness with his subsequent career, more active in its maturity than in its prime. And compare them also with what he writes four years later, during the war between Prussia and Austria. There is no despondency, no lack of spirit or activity in him.

' The Austrians,' he writes to his wife, ' are stationed in Moravia, and we are already so bold as to fix our headquarters for to-morrow on the spot where they are yet standing to-day.... If they bring up their Army of the South, we shall, with God's gracious help, beat them too. Our people deserve kissing; every one so brave, calm, obedient, well conducted, with empty stomach, wet clothes, wet couch, little sleep, shoeless, kind to every one, no plundering and burning; they pay what they can, and eat mouldy bread. There must, after all, be a large fund of the fear of God in our common people, or this could not be.'

Before the two well-known attempts on Bismarck's life, the first at Berlin in 1866, and the second at Kissingen in 1875, his life was several times in danger from the machinations of would-be assassins. He alludes to them in a letter to his wife, dated Berlin, 27th October 1863.

' His Majesty,' he says, ' has returned; the threats against his life are more to be thought of than those against mine, but all is in God's hand. These two copies [of the ninety-first psalm] have this morning reached me from two different quarters.'

If Bismarck's genius and activity exposed him to serious danger, it also subjected him to that petty persecution of being lionised. His dislike of the practice appears in various portions of his private correspondence; two quotations will suffice.

In July 1863 he writes :

' Travelling does me a deal of good, but it is most annoying at every station to be stared at like a Japanese. It is all over with incognito and its amenities, until, like many others before me, I shall be forgotten, and another has the privilege of being the object of universal ill-will.'

In July 1864, during his stay at Vienna, he wrote :

' I spent two hours in the public gardens,—stared at by the people like a new hippopotamus for the Zoological Gardens, for which I sought consolation in very good beer.'

Let us conclude these extracts from Bismarck's private correspondence by a few descriptive passages, which will show us that the politician has an eye for natural beauty, and is not destitute of humour.

In a letter to his wife, dated Frankfurt, 8th July 1851, he writes :

' I have just returned from a walk, in which, in the balmy air of a summer's night, moonlight, and the rustling of poplar-trees, I have rubbed off the dust of official deeds and documents. On Saturday I rode with Rochow and Lynax to Rüdesheim, where I took a boat, and then, by the

light of the moon, swam as far as the Mouse Tower, where the wicked bishop perished. There is something very romantic in lying thus in a still warm night in the water, slowly drifted along by the stream, and to see above the sky, with moon and stars, and to the right and left the wooded mountain-tops and embattled towers, and to hear nothing but the gentle splash of your own movements. I should like to have such a swim every night.'

Here is the description of an interior:

'I sit here [at Ofen], breakfasting alone, and smoking, in a very spacious apartment, of four rooms, all with massive vaulted ceilings, walls as thick as those at Schönhausen, gigantic walnut presses, the furniture covered in blue silk, and on the floor a profusion of large black spots, which a more excited imagination than mine might take for blood, but which I most decidedly declare to be ink stains; an incredibly awkward scrawler must have ruled here, or a second Luther repeatedly have thrown big inkstands at the head of the Adversary. . . . Below, on long timber rafts, the strangest, brown, broad-hatted, and wide-trousered figures are floating down the Danube. I am sorry I am not a draughtsman, to place under your eyes those wild faces, bearded, long-haired, with fierce black eyes, and the simple picturesque drapery that covers them.'

Here is the pleasant account of a trip taken by Bismarck :

'The place [Szolnok] lies on the border of the Hungarian steppes, which, for the fun of the thing, I wished to have a look at. They would not let me travel without an escort, since the country round about here is rendered insecure by bands of mounted robbers, popularly called Be-

tyars (vagabonds). After a comfortable breakfast I mounted a very low wagon, drawn by three horses of the steppe, the Uhlans loaded their carbines, and off we went at a furious rate. On the front seat, Hildebrand, a Hungarian *valet de place*, and a coachman, a dark-brown peasant with moustaches, broad-brimmed hat, long black hair, glistening with lard, and a shirt, which ends at the stomach, and lets a dark-brown girdle of his own skin be seen, to the commencement of the white trousers, each leg wide enough to make a woman's petticoat, and which reach down to the knees, where the spurred boots join them. Represent to yourself firm turf, as level as a table, on which, as far as the horizon extends, you see nothing but the high bare posts of the draw-wells, dug for the half-wild horses and bullocks; thousands of these light-gray animals with horns a yard long, of shaggy mean-looking horses, guarded by mounted half-naked herdsmen, armed with lance-like staves; endless droves of swine, always accompanied by an ass, carrying the drover's fur cloak, and occasionally himself; then great crowds of bustards, hares, wild geese, ducks, and plovers, were the objects we passed by during the three hours it took us to accomplish the seven [German] miles to Ketskemet . . . where I spent the evening with a very pleasant corps of officers, who insisted on my taking an escort farther on. The worst robbers' nests were said to be in the district to which I was going, on the Theiss, where swamps and deserts render their extermination almost impossible. These Betyars are well mounted and armed; attack travellers and farms in bands of fifteen and twenty, and the next day are

twenty [German] miles away from them. To gentlefolks they are polite. I had left the greater part of my cash with Prince W., and had somewhat of an itching to form a better acquaintance with these mounted robbers, in big fur cloaks, armed with double-barrelled guns and pistols in their girdles, whose leaders wear black masks, and are said occasionally to belong to the inferior squiarchy. A few days ago several gendarmes had been killed in an engagement with them, in return for which, however, two robbers had been caught and shot at Ketskemet. Such things do not happen in our dull neighbourhood. . . . The robbers were nowhere to be seen; as my neat brown lieutenant told me, they would early in the morning know that I travelled with an escort, but that for certain some of them might be found among the venerable well-to-do peasants, who, dressed in embroidered sheepskin cloaks reaching down to the ground, at the stations gravely examined and saluted us with an honest *istem adiamek*, God be praised! The sun burnt down on us all day—I am as red as a lobster in the face. . . . I arrived here at five o'clock. . . . The wildest and maddest gipsy melodies penetrate into my room. Between whilsts they sing through the nose, with widely-opened mouths, in horrible discord, stories of black eyes and the brave death of a robber, in sounds which remind you of the wind when it howls down the chimney. The women, as a rule, are well grown, some exceedingly handsome; all have pitch-dark hair,' &c.

Here is a pretty pen-and-ink sketch:

'Since then I have seen a charming district—West Friesland—quite flat, but full of groves

and hedges, each neat farmhouse surrounded by a little wood, so as to make you long for the calm independence which seems to be reigning there. — will probably attribute my being so pleased with the country to the fact that all the girls are as beautiful as they are at Linz and Gmünden, though taller and more slim than these, blond, and with a complexion like milk and roses, and a very becoming golden headdress, resembling a helmet.'

Here are a couple of portraits:

'Opposite to me [at the *table d'hôte*] sits the old Minister —, one of those figures that appear to us in nightmares, a big frog without legs, who at every bite opens his mouth like a carpet-bag, from ear to ear, so that I in a fainting state have to cling to the table. My other neighbour is a Russian officer; a decent young fellow, built like a boot-jack, a long thin body, and stumpy bandy legs.'

Here and there we meet with other humorous traits. Having made some ink blots in a letter to his sister, he writes underneath: 'Excuse this quotation in Arabic; I have no time to write this scrawl over again.' From the Hôtel de Douvres, at Paris, he writes: 'I have five chimneys, and yet am cold; five timepieces, and know not the time; eleven large looking-glasses, and yet my necktie is always awry.' Then, when residing at a country-house at some distance from Moscow, he blesses himself for being 'out of the reach of the telegraph.' Writing in Paris, in a mansion with about ten rooms on the ground-floor, he speaks with disgust of the German Ambassador's residence in London:

'I left London a week ago,' he reports to his wife. 'I would gladly have stayed there longer, one sees so many handsome faces [the Prince evidently is partial to

handsome women, and is not reticent on the point; but what does his wife say to his predilection?] and handsome horses. But the ambassadorial residence is my horror. It is handsomely furnished; but on the ground-floor there are only three rooms, of which one is the *chancellerie*, another a dining-room, and between the two the third—which is so small that there is no corner for taking off your dressing-gown—forms his Excellency's study. If you want a wash-hand basin, or something of the sort, you must go up the high staircase, and pass through the connubial bedchamber into a small doghole of a room. On the first floor there is a large drawing-room, a small ball-room, the said bedroom and doghole, that is all. On the second floor there are two rooms for the secretary, five small apartments for children, tutor, governess, &c. On the attic floor the servants, in the cellar the kitchen. I became quite melancholy at the thought of being shut up there.' Evidently the Prince has no notion how space is economised in London.

We cannot more appropriately conclude these selections from Bismarck's private correspondence than by giving the translation of a letter, which indeed has already been published in England—not that we are aware of the fact from personal experience or hearsay—but it seems to us almost an impossibility that it should not have been so published, since the letter, addressed to the Minister's wife, but intercepted by the French *Frantireurs*, appeared in a French newspaper. Its date and contents attest its historical importance. It runs thus :

'Vendresse, 3 Septr. 1870.

'Dear Heart,—The day before yesterday before dawn I left

my quarters here, returned to-day, and have in the interim witnessed the great battle of Sedan, in which we made about thirty thousand prisoners, and threw the rest of the French army—we had been pursuing from Bar le Duc—into the fortress, where, with the Emperor, they were obliged to surrender. At five o'clock yesterday morning, after having till one o'clock discussed with Moltke and the French generals the terms of the capitulation, I was awakened by General Reille, whom I know, to tell me that Napoleon wished to see me. Unwashed and without breakfast, I rode towards Sedan, and found the Emperor in an open carriage with three aides-de-camp, and three on horseback, on the highway this side of Sedan. I dismounted, saluted him as politely as at the Tuileries, and asked what were his commands. He desired to see the King. I informed him, in accordance with the truth, that his Majesty had his quarters three miles off, at the place where I am now writing. To Napoleon's question where he was to go, I offered him, as I did not know the neighbourhood, my quarters at Donchery, a small place close to Sedan. He accepted the offer; and rode, accompanied by the six Frenchmen, by me and Charles, who in the mean time had followed me through the solitary morning hours, towards our side. Before arriving at Donchery he regretted his decision, on account of the crowd that might be expected, and asked whether he might alight at a lonely workman's cottage by the roadside. I told Charles to inspect it; who reported that it was poor and dirty. *N'impose*, said N.; and we ascended a narrow rickety staircase. We sat an hour in a chamber ten feet square, with a deal table and two rush-bottomed chairs; the others

were below. A mighty contrast to our last interview, in '67, in the Tuilleries. Our conversation was difficult, if I was not to touch on things which should not painfully affect the man so terribly cast down by God's powerful hand. I had sent Charles to fetch officers from the town, and to request Moltke to come. We then despatched one of the former to reconnoitre, and discovered at half a mile's distance, at Fresnois, a small château in a park. Thither I accompanied the Emperor with an escort of life-cuirassiers, sent for in the mean while; and there we concluded with Commanding General Wimpffen the capitulation, in consequence of which from forty to sixty thousand Frenchmen, with all their baggage, became our prisoners. Yesterday and the previous day have

cost France a hundred thousand men and an Emperor. Early this morning the latter, with all his attendants, horses and carriages, started for Wilhelmshöhe, near Cassel.

'It is an historical event, a victory, for which we most humbly thank God, and which determines the war, though we must continue it against the country, now without a ruler.

'I must conclude. With heartfelt joy I learnt from your and Mary's letters Herbert's arrival with you. As my telegram has told you, I saw Bill yesterday, and embraced him in his Majesty's presence, bending down from my horse, whilst he stood stiff in the ranks. He is well, and full of spirits.

'Farewell, my heart.

'Yours, &c.'



MICHAEL STROGOFF,
OR THE RUSSIAN COURIER.
BY JULES VERNE.

CHAPTER XII.

PROVOCATION.

EKATERENBURG, geographically, is an Asiatic city; for it is situated beyond the Ural Mountains, on the farthest eastern slopes of the chain. Nevertheless, it belongs to the government of Perm; and, consequently, is included in one of the great divisions of European Russia. It is as though a morsel of Siberia lay in Russian jaws.

Neither Michael nor his companions were likely to experience the slightest difficulty in obtaining means of continuing their journey in so large a town as Ekaterenburg. It was founded in 1723, and has since become a place of considerable size, for in it is the chief mint of the empire. There also are the headquarters of the officials employed in the management of the mines. Thus the town is the centre of an important district, abounding in manufactories principally for the working and refining of gold and platina.

Just now the population of Ekaterenburg had greatly increased; numerous Russians and Siberians, menaced by the Tartar invasion, having collected there, driven from those provinces already overrun by the hordes of Feofar-Khan and the Kirgis country, which extends to the south-west of the Irtych as far as the frontiers of Turkestan.

Thus, though it had been so troublesome a matter to find horses and vehicles when going to

Ekaterenburg, there was no difficulty in leaving it; for under present circumstances few travellers cared to venture on the Siberian roads.

So it happened that Blount and Alcide had not the slightest trouble in replacing, by a sound telga, the famous demi-carriage which had managed to take them to Ekaterenburg. As to Michael, he retained his tarantass, which was not much the worse for its journey across the Urals; and he had only to harness three good horses to it to take him swiftly over the road to Irkutsk.

As far as Tioumen, and even up to Novo-Zaimskoë, this road has slight inclines, which gentle undulations are the first signs of the slopes of the Ural Mountains. But, after Novo-Zaimskoë, begins the immense steppe which extends almost as far as Krasnoiarsk, over a space of seventeen hundred versts (about 1122 miles).

At Ichim, as we have said, the reporters intended to stop, that is at about six hundred and thirty versts from Ekaterenburg. There they intended to be guided by circumstances as to their route across the invaded country, either together or separately, according as their news-hunting instinct set them on one track or another.

This road from Ekaterenburg to Ichim—which passes through Irkutsk—was the only one which Michael could take. But, as he did not run after news, and wished, on the contrary, to avoid the country

devastated by the invaders, he determined to stop nowhere.

'I am very happy to make part of my journey in your company,' said he to his new companions, 'but I must tell you that I am most anxious to reach Omsk; for my sister and I are going to rejoin our mother. Who can say whether we shall arrive before the Tartars reach the town! I must therefore stop at the posthouses only long enough to change horses, and must travel day and night.'

'That is exactly what we intend doing,' replied Blount.

'Good,' replied Michael; 'but do not lose an instant. Buy or hire a carriage whose—'

'Whose hind wheels,' added Alcide, 'are warranted to arrive at the same time as its front wheels.'

Half an hour afterwards the energetic Frenchman had found a tarantass as nearly as possible like Michael's, and in which he and his companion at once seated themselves.

Michael and Nadia once more took their places in their carriage, and at twelve o'clock the two vehicles left the town of Ekaterburg together.

Nadia was at last in Siberia, on that long road which led to Irkutsk. What must then have been the thoughts of the young girl? Three strong swift horses were taking her across that land of exile where her parent was condemned to live, for how long she knew not, and so far from his native land. But she scarcely noticed those long steppes over which the tarantass was rolling, and which at one time she had despaired of ever seeing, for her eyes were gazing at the horizon beyond which she knew was her banished father. She saw nothing of the country across which she was travelling at the rate of fifteen versts an hour; nothing of these

regions of Western Siberia, so different from those of the east. Here, indeed, were few cultivated fields; the soil was poor, at least at the surface, but in its bowels lay hid quantities of iron, copper, platina, and gold. There were too plenty of busy factories, but very few farms. How can hands be found to cultivate the land, sow the seed, and reap the harvest, when it pays better to burrow beneath the earth? The pickaxe is everywhere at work; the spade nowhere.

However, Nadia's thoughts sometimes left the provinces of Lake Baikal, and returned to her present situation. Her father's image faded away, and was replaced by that of her generous companion as he first appeared on the Vladimir railroad. She recalled his attentions during that journey, his arrival at the police-station, the hearty simplicity with which he had called her sister, his kindness to her in the descent of the Volga, and then all that he did for her on that terrible night of the storm in the Urals, when he saved her life at the peril of his own.

Thus Nadia thought of Michael. She thanked God for having given her such a gallant protector, a friend so generous and wise. She knew that she was safe with him, under his protection. No brother could have done more than he. All obstacles seemed cleared away; the performance of her journey was but a matter of time.

Michael remained buried in thought. He also thanked God for having brought about his meeting with Nadia, which at the same time enabled him to do a good action, and afforded him additional means for concealing his true character. He delighted in the young girl's calm intrepidity. Was she not indeed his sister? His feeling towards his beautiful

and brave companion was rather respect than affection. He felt that hers was one of those pure and rare hearts which are held by all in high esteem.

However, Michael's dangers were now beginning since he had reached Siberian ground. If the reporters were not mistaken, if Ivan Ogareff had really passed the frontier, all his actions must be made with extreme caution. Things were now altered; Tartar spies swarmed in the Siberian provinces. His incognito once discovered, his character as courier of the Czar known, there was an end of his journey, and probably of his life. Michael felt now more than ever the weight of his responsibility.

While such were the thoughts of those occupying the first carriage, what was happening in the second? Nothing out of the way. Alcide spoke in sentences; Blount replied by monosyllables. Each looked at everything in his own light, and made notes of such incidents as occurred on the journey—few and but slightly varied—while they crossed the provinces of Western Siberia.

At each relay the reporters descended from their carriage and found themselves with Michael. Except when meals were to be taken at the posthouses, Nadia did not leave the tarantass. When obliged to breakfast or dine, she sat at table; but was always very reserved, and seldom joined in conversation.

Alcide, without going beyond the limits of strict propriety, showed that he was greatly struck by the young girl. He admired the silent energy which she showed in bearing all the fatigues of so long and difficult a journey.

The forced stoppages were anything but agreeable to Michael; so he hastened the departure at

each relay, roused the innkeepers, urged on the iemachiks, and expedited the harnessing of the tarantass. Then the hurried meal over—always too much hurried to agree with Blount, who was a methodical eater—they started, and were driven as eagles, for they paid like princes, and, as Alcide said, in 'Russian eagles.'^{*}

It need scarcely be said that Blount did not trouble himself about the girl at table. That gentleman was not in the habit of doing two things at once. She was also one of the few subjects of conversation which he did not care to discuss with his companion.

Alcide having asked him, on one occasion, how old he thought the girl:

'What girl?' he replied, quite seriously, half shutting his eyes.

'Why, Nicholas Korpanoff's sister.'

'Is she his sister?'

'No; his grandmother' replied Alcide, angry at his indifference. 'What age should you consider her?'

'Had I been present at her birth I might have known,' replied Blount curtly.

The country they were then crossing was almost a desert. The weather was fine, the sky partly clouded, the temperature more supportable. Had the carriages only possessed springs, the travellers would have had nothing to complain of in the journey. They were travelling at the same rate as post-berlines, and that is saying something for their speed.

But very few of the Siberian peasants were to be seen in the fields. These peasants are remarkable for their pale grave faces, which a celebrated traveller has compared to those of the Castilians,

^{*}A gold Russian coin, worth five roubles. A rouble is a silver coin worth 100 copecks, about three shillings.

without the haughtiness of the latter. Here and there some villages already deserted indicated the approach of the Tartar hordes. The inhabitants, having driven off their flocks of sheep, their camels and their horses, were taking refuge in the plains of the north. Some tribes of the wandering Kirgis, who remained faithful, had transported their tents beyond the Irtych and the Obi, to escape the depredations of the invaders.

Happily, post travelling was as yet uninterrupted ; and telegraphic communication could still be effected between places connected with the wire. At each relay horses were to be had on the usual conditions. At each telegraphic station the clerks, seated at their desks, transmitted messages delivered to them, delaying for State despatches alone.

Thus far, then, Michael's journey had been accomplished satisfactorily. The courier of the Czar had in no way been impeded ; and, if he could only get on to Krasnoiarsk, which was the farthest point attained by Feofar-Khan's Tartars, he knew that he could arrive at Irkutsk before them. The day after the two carriages had left Ekaterenburg they reached the small town of Touloguisk at seven o'clock in the morning, having covered two hundred and twenty versts, no event worthy of mention having occurred.

Half an hour was then devoted to dinner. This over, the travellers once more started at a rate which the promise of a certain number of copecks could alone explain. The same evening, the 22d of July, they arrived at Tioumen, sixty versts farther.

Tioumen, whose population is usually ten thousand inhabitants, then contained double that number. This, the first industrial

town established by the Russians in Siberia, in which may be seen a fine metal-refining factory and a bell foundry, had never before presented such an animated appearance. The correspondents immediately went off after news. That brought by Siberian fugitives from the seat of war was far from reassuring. They said, amongst other things, that Feofar-Khan's army was rapidly approaching the valley of the Ichim, and they confirmed the report that the Tartar chief was soon to be joined by Colonel Ogareff, if he had not been so already. Hence the conclusion naturally arrived at was that operations would be pushed in Eastern Siberia with the greatest activity.

On the other hand, it had been necessary to summon the Russian troops from the European provinces of Russia chiefly, but, being still at some distance, they could not oppose the invasion. However, the Cossacks of the government of Tobolsk had been advancing by forced marches towards Tomsk, in the hope of cutting off the Tartar columns.

At eight o'clock in the evening, seventy-five versts more having been accomplished by the two carriages, they arrived at Yaloutorowsk.

Horses were rapidly changed, and, on leaving the town, the river Tobol was passed in a ferry-boat. Its peaceful waters rendered this operation easy ; it would, however, have to be repeated more than once in the journey, and probably under less favourable conditions.

At midnight, fifty-five versts farther, the town of Novo-Saimsk was reached ; and the travellers now left behind them the country broken by tree-covered hills, the last remains of the Ural Mountains.

Here began the regular Siberian steppe which extends to the neighbourhood of Kraanoiarsk. It is a boundless plain, a vast grassy desert; earth and sky here form a circle as distinct as that traced by a sweep of the compasses. The steppe presents nothing to attract notice but the long line of the telegraph posts, their wires vibrating in the breeze like the strings of a harp. The road could be distinguished from the rest of the plain only by the clouds of fine dust which rose under the wheels of the tarantass. Had it not been for this white riband, which stretched away as far as the eye could reach, the travellers might have thought themselves in a desert.

Michael and his companions again pressed rapidly forward across the steppe. The horses, urged on by the iemschik, seemed to fly over the ground, for there was not the slightest obstacle to impede them. The tarantass was going straight for Ichim, where the two correspondents intended to stop, if nothing happened to make them alter their plans.

Nearly two hundred versts separated Novo-Saimak from the town of Ichim, and before eight o'clock the next evening the distance could and should be accomplished if no time was lost. In the opinion of the iemschiks, should the travellers not be great lords or high functionaries, they were worthy of being so, if it was only for their generosity in the matter of 'na vodkou.'

On the afternoon of the next day, the 23d of July, the two carriages were not more than thirty versts from Ichim. Suddenly Michael caught sight of a carriage—scarcely visible among the clouds of dust—preceding them along the road. As his horses were evidently less fatigued

than those of the other traveller, he would not be long in overtaking it. This was neither a tarantass nor a telga, but a post-berlin, all over dust, and looking as if it had made a long journey. The postilion was thrashing his horses with all his might, and only kept them at a gallop by dint of abuse and blows. The berlin had certainly not passed through Novo-Saimak, and could only have struck the Irkutsk road by some less frequented route across the steppe.

Our travellers' first thought, on seeing this berlin, was to get in front of it, and arrive first at the relay, so as to make sure of fresh horses. They said a word to their iemschiks, who soon brought them up with the berlin.

Michael Strogoff came up first.

As he passed a head was thrust out of the window of the berlin.

He had not time to see what it was like, but as he dashed by he distinctly heard this word, uttered in an imperious tone :

'Stop!'

But they did not stop; on the contrary, the berlin was soon distanced by the two tarantasses.

It now became a regular race; for the horses of the berlin—no doubt excited by the sight and pace of the others—recovered their strength and kept up for some minutes. The three carriages were hidden in a cloud of dust. From this cloud issued the cracking of whips, mingled with excited shouts and exclamations of anger.

Nevertheless, the advantage remained with Michael and his companions, which might be very important to them if the relay was poorly provided with horses. Two carriages were perhaps more than the postmaster could provide for, at least in a short space of time.

Half an hour after the *berlin* was left far behind, looking only a speck on the horizon of the steppe.

It was eight o'clock in the evening when the two carriages arrived at the posthouse in Ichim.

The news was worse and worse with regard to the invasion.

The town itself was menaced by the Tartar vanguard; and two days before the authorities had been obliged to retreat to Tobolsk. There was not an officer nor a soldier left in Ichim.

On arriving at the relay, Michael Strogoff immediately asked for horses.

He had been fortunate in distancing the *berlin*.

Only three horses were in a fit state to be immediately harnessed. The others had just come in worn-out from a long stage.

The postmaster gave the order to put to.

As the two correspondents intended to stop at Ichim, they had not to trouble themselves to find means of transport, and therefore had their carriage put away.

In ten minutes Michael was told that his tarantass was ready to start.

'Good,' said he.

Then turning to the two reporters :

'Well, gentlemen, since you remain at Ichim, the time is come for us to separate.'

'What, Mr. Korpanoff,' said Alcide Jolivet, 'shall you not stop even for an hour at Ichim?'

'No, sir; and I also wish to leave the posthouse before the arrival of the *berlin* which we distanced.'

'Are you afraid that the traveller will dispute the horses with you?'

'I particularly wish to avoid any difficulty.'

'Then, Mr. Korpanoff,' said Jolivet, 'it only remains for us

to thank you once more for the service you rendered us, and for the pleasure we have had in travelling in your company.'

'It is possible that we shall meet you again in a few days at Omsk,' added Blount.

'It is possible,' answered Michael, 'since I am going straight there.'

'Well, I wish you a safe journey, Mr. Korpanoff,' said Alcide, 'and Heaven preserve you from telgas.'

The two reporters held out their hands to Michael with the intention of cordially shaking his, when the sound of a carriage was heard outside.

Almost immediately the door was flung open and a man appeared.

It was the traveller of the *berlin*, a military-looking man, apparently about forty years of age, tall, robust in figure, broad-shouldered, with a strongly-set head, and thick moustaches meeting red whiskers. He wore a plain uniform. A cavalry sabre hung at his side, and in his hand he held a short-handled whip.

'Horses,' he demanded, with the air of a man accustomed to command.

'I have no more disposable horses,' answered the postmaster, bowing.

'I must have some this moment.'

'It is impossible.'

'What are those horses which have just been harnessed to the tarantass I saw at the door?'

'They belong to this traveller,' answered the postmaster, pointing to Michael Strogoff.

'Take them out!' said the traveller in a tone which admitted of no reply.

Michael then advanced.

'These horses are engaged by me,' he said.

'What does that matter? I must have them. Come, be quick; I have no time to lose.'

'I have no time to lose either,' replied Michael, endeavouring to

'Enough!' said the traveller. Then, going up to the postmaster:

'Let the horses be taken out of the tarantass and put into my



be calm, but restraining himself with difficulty.

Nadia was near him, calm also, but secretly uneasy at a scene which it would have been better to avoid.

'berlin,' he exclaimed with a threatening gesture.

The postmaster, much embarrassed, did not know whom to obey, and looked at Michael, who evidently had the right to resist

the unjust demands of the traveller.

Michael hesitated an instant. He did not wish to make use of his podorojna, which would have drawn attention to him, and he was most unwilling either by giving up his horses to delay his journey, and yet it was important not to engage in a struggle which might compromise his mission.

The two reporters looked at him ready to support him should he appeal to them.

'My horses will remain in my carriage,' said Michael, but without raising his tone more than would be suitable for a plain Irkutsk merchant.

The traveller advanced towards Michael and laid his hand heavily on his shoulder.

'Is it so?' he said in a rough voice. 'You will not give up your horses to me?'

'No,' answered Michael.

'Very well; then they shall belong to whichever of us is able to start. Defend yourself, for I shall not spare you!'

So saying, the traveller drew his sabre from its sheath, and Nadia threw herself before Michael.

Blount and Alcide Jolivet advanced towards him.

'I shall not fight,' said Michael quietly, folding his arms across his chest.

'You will not fight?'

'No.'

'Not even after this?' exclaimed the traveller. And before anyone could prevent him, he struck Michael's shoulder with the handle of the whip. At this insult Michael turned deadly pale. His hands moved convulsively as if he would have knocked the brute down. But by a tremendous effort he mastered himself. A duel! it was more than a delay; it was perhaps the failure of his mission.

It would be better to lose some hours. Yes; but to swallow this affront!

'Will you fight now, coward?' repeated the traveller, adding coarseness to brutality.

'No,' answered Michael, without moving, but looking the other straight in the face.

'The horses this moment,' said the man, and left the room.

The postmaster followed him, after shrugging his shoulders and bestowing on Michael a glance of anything but approbation.

The effect produced on the reporters by this incident was not to Michael's advantage. Their discomfiture was visible. How could this strong young man allow himself to be struck like that and not demand satisfaction for such an insult? They contented themselves with bowing to him and retired, Jolivet remarking to Harry Blount:

'I could not have believed that of a man who is so skilful in finishing up Ural mountain bears. Is it the case that a man can be courageous at one time and a coward at another? It is quite incomprehensible.'

A moment afterwards the noise of wheels and the cracking of a whip showed that the berline, drawn by the tarantass' horses, was driving rapidly away from the posthouse.

Nadia, unmoved, and Michael, still quivering, remained alone in the room.

The courier of the Czar, his arms crossed over his chest, was seated motionless as a statue. However, a colour, which could not have been the blush of shame, had replaced the paleness on his manly countenance.

Nadia did not doubt that powerful reasons alone could have allowed him to suffer so great a humiliation from such a man.

Then going up to him as he had come to her in the police-station at Nijni-Novgorod :

'Your hand, brother,' said she.

And at the same time her hand, with an almost maternal gesture, wiped away a tear which sprang to her companion's eye.

CHAPTER XIII.

DUTY BEFORE EVERYTHING.

NADIA, with the clear perception of a right-minded woman, guessed that some secret motive directed all Michael Strogoff's actions ; that he, for a reason unknown to her, did not belong to himself ; that he had not the power of doing what he desired ; and that in this instance especially he had heroically sacrificed to duty even his resentment at the gross injury he had received.

Nadia, therefore, asked no explanation from Michael. Had not the hand which she had extended to him already replied to all that he might have been able to tell her ?

Michael remained silent all the evening. The postmaster not being able to supply them with fresh horses until the next morning, a whole night must be passed at the house. Nadia could profit by it to take some rest, and a room was therefore prepared for her.

The young girl would no doubt have preferred not to leave her companion, but she felt that he would rather be alone, and she made ready to go to her room.

Just as she was about to retire she could not refrain from going up to Michael to say good-night.

'Brother,' she whispered.

But he checked her with a gesture. The girl sighed and left the room.

Michael Strogoff did not lie

down. He could not have slept even for an hour. The place on which he had been struck by the brutal traveller felt like a burn.

'For my country and the Father,' he muttered as he ended his evening prayer.

He especially felt a great wish to know who was the man who had struck him, whence he came, and where he was going. As to his face, the features of it were so deeply engraven on his memory that he had no fear of ever forgetting them.

Michael at last asked for the postmaster. The latter, a Siberian of the old type, came directly, and looking rather contemptuously at the young man, waited to be questioned.

'You belong to the country?' asked Michael.

'Yes.'

'Do you know that man who took my horses?'

'No.'

'Had you never seen him before?'

'Never.'

'Who do you think he was?'

'A man who knows how to make himself obeyed.'

Michael fixed his piercing gaze upon the Siberian, but the other did not quail before it.

'Do you dare to judge me?' exclaimed Michael.

'Yes,' answered the Siberian, 'for there are some things that even plain merchant cannot receive without returning.'

'Blows?'

'Blows, young man. I am of an age and strength to tell you so.'

Michael went up to the postmaster and laid his two powerful hands on his shoulders.

Then in a peculiarly calm tone :

'Be off, my friend,' said he ; 'be off ! I could kill you.'

The postmaster understood this time.

'I like him better for that,' he muttered as he retired without adding another word.

At eight o'clock the next morning, the 24th of July, three strong horses were harnessed to the tarantass. Michael and Nadia took their places, and Ichim, with its disagreeable remembrances, was soon left far behind.

At the different relays at which they stopped during the day Strogoff ascertained that the berlin still preceded them on the road to Irkutsk, and that the traveller, as hurried as they were, never lost a minute in pursuing his way across the steppe.

At four o'clock in the evening they reached Abatskaia, seventy-five versts farther on, where the Ichim, one of the principal affluents of the Irtych, had to be crossed.

This passage was rather more difficult than that of the Tobol. Indeed, the current of the Ichim was very rapid just at that place. During the Siberian winter, the rivers being all frozen to a thickness of several feet, they are easily practicable, and the traveller even crosses them without being aware of the fact, for their beds have disappeared under the snowy sheet spread uniformly over the steppe ; but in summer the difficulties of crossing are sometimes great.

In fact, two hours were taken up in making the passage of the Ichim, which much exasperated Michael, especially as the boatmen gave them alarming news of the Tartar invasion.

This is what they said :

Some of Feofar-Khan's scouts had already appeared on both banks of the lower Ichim, in the southern parts of the government of Tobolsk. Omsk was threatened. They spoke of an engagement

which had taken place between the Siberian and Tartar troops on the frontier of the great Kirghese horde—an engagement which had not been to the advantage of the Russians, who were somewhat weak in numbers in that direction. The troops had retreated from thence, and in consequence there had been a general emigration of all the peasants of the province. The boatmen spoke of horrible atrocities committed by the invaders—pillage, theft, incendiaryism, murder. Such was the system of Tartar warfare.

The people fled on all sides before Michael Feofar-Khan. Michael Strogoff's great fear was lest, in the depopulation of the towns and hamlets, he should be unable to obtain the means of transport. He was therefore extremely anxious to reach Omsk. Perhaps on leaving this town they would get the start of the Tartar scouts, who were coming down the valley of the Irtych, and would find the road open to Irkutsk.

Just at the place where the tarantass crossed the river ended what is called, in military language, the 'Ichim chain'—a chain of towers, or little wooden forts, extending from the southern frontier of Siberia for a distance of nearly four hundred versts. Formerly these forts were occupied by detachments of Cossacks, and they protected the country against the Kirghese, as well as against the Tartars. But since the Muscovite Government had believed these hordes reduced to absolute submission, they had been abandoned, and now could not be used, just at the time when they would have been most useful. Many of these forts had been reduced to ashes ; and the boatmen even pointed out the smoke to Michael, rising in the southern

horizon, and showing the approach of the Tartar advance-guard.

As soon as the ferryboat landed the tarantass and its occupants on the right bank of the Ichim,

and then a shower of rain fell, which laid the dust and much improved the roads. Michael Strogoff had remained very silent from the time they left Ichim.



the journey across the steppe was resumed with all possible speed.

It was seven in the evening. The sky was cloudy. Every now

He was, however, always attentive to Nadia, helping her to bear the fatigue of this long journey without break or rest; but the girl never complained. She longed

to give wings to the horses. Something told her that her companion was even more anxious than herself to reach Irkutsk ; and how many versts were still between !

It also occurred to her that if Omsk was entered by the Tartars, Michael's mother, who lived there, would be in danger, about which her son would be very uneasy, and that this was sufficient to explain his impatience to get to her.

Nadia at last spoke to him of old Marfa, and of how unprotected she would be in the midst of all these events.

'Have you received any news of your mother since the beginning of the invasion ?' she asked.

'None, Nadia. The last letter my mother wrote to me contained good news. Marfa is a brave and energetic Siberian woman. Notwithstanding her age, she has preserved all her moral strength. She knows how to suffer.'

'I shall see her, brother,' said Nadia quickly. 'Since you give me the name of sister, I am Marfa's daughter.'

And as Michael did not answer she added :

'Perhaps your mother has been able to leave Omsk ?'

'It is possible, Nadia,' replied Michael ; 'and I hope she may have reached Tobolsk. Marfa hates the Tartars. She knows the steppe, and would have no fear in just taking her staff and going down the banks of the Irtych. There is not a spot in all the province unknown to her. Many times has she travelled all over the country with my father ; and many times I myself, when a mere child, have accompanied them in their journeys across the Siberian desert. Yes, Nadia, I trust that my mother has left Omsk.'

'And when shall you see her ?'

'I shall see her—on my return.'

'If, however, your mother is still at Omsk, you will be able to spare an hour to go to her ?'

'I shall not go and see her.'

'You will not see her ?'

'No, Nadia,' answered Michael, his chest heaving as he felt that he could not go on replying to the girl's questions.

'You say no ! Why, brother, if your mother is still at Omsk, for what reason could you refuse to see her ?'

'For what reason, Nadia. You ask me for what reason,' exclaimed Michael, in so changed a voice that the young girl started. 'For the same reason as that which made me patient even to cowardice with the villain who—'

He could not finish his sentence.

'Calm yourself, brother,' said Nadia in a gentle voice. 'I only know one thing, or rather I do not know it, I feel it. It is that all your conduct is now directed by the sentiment of a duty more sacred—if there can be one—than that which unites the son to the mother.'

Nadia was silent, and from that moment avoided every subject which in any way touched on Michael's peculiar situation. He had a secret motive which she must respect. She respected it.

The next day, July 25th, at three o'clock in the morning, the tarantass arrived at the posthouse in Tioukalmsk, having accomplished a distance of one hundred and twenty versts since it had crossed the Ichim.

They rapidly changed horses. Here, however, for the first time, the iemschik made difficulties about starting, declaring that detachments of Tartars were roving

across the steppe, and that travellers, horses, and carriages would be a fine prize for such robbers.

Only by dint of a large bribe could Michael get over the unwillingness of the iemschik, for in this instance, as in many others, he did not wish to show his podorojna. The last ukase, having been transmitted by telegraph, was known in the Siberian provinces; and a Russian specially exempted from obeying these orders would certainly have drawn public attention to himself—a thing above all to be avoided by the Czar's courier. As to the iemschik's hesitation, either the rascal traded on the traveller's impatience or he really had good reason to fear some misfortune.

However, at last the tarantass started, and made such good way that by three in the afternoon it had reached Koulatsinskoé, eighty versts farther on. An hour after this it was on the banks of the Irtych. Omsk was now only twenty versts distant.

The Irtych is a large river, and one of the principal of those which flow towards the north of Asia. Rising in the Ataï Mountains, it flows from the south-east to the north-west, and empties itself into the Obi, after a course of nearly seven thousand versts.

At this time of year, when all the rivers of the Siberian basin are much swollen, the waters of the Irtych were very high. In consequence the current was changed to a regular torrent, rendering the passage difficult enough. A swimmer could not have crossed, however powerful a one he might be; and even in a ferryboat there would be some danger.

But Michael and Nadia, determined to brave all perils whatever they might be, did not dream of shrinking from this one.

However, Michael proposed to

his young companion that he should cross first, embarking in the ferryboat with the tarantass and horses, as he feared that the weight of this load would render it less safe. After landing the carriage on the opposite bank he would return and fetch Nadia.

The girl refused. It would be the delay of an hour, and she would not, for her safety alone, be the cause of it.

The embarkation was made not without difficulty, for the banks were partly flooded and the boat could not get in near enough.

However, after half an hour's exertion, the boatmen got the tarantass and the three horses on board. Michael, Nadia, and the iemschik embarked also, and they shoved off.

For a few minutes all went well. A little way up the river the current was broken by a long point projecting from the bank, and forming an eddy easily crossed by the boat. The two boatmen propelled their barge with long poles, which they handled cleverly; but as they gained the middle of the stream it grew deeper and deeper, until at last they could only just reach the bottom. The ends of the poles were only a foot above the water, which rendered their use difficult and insufficient. Michael and Nadia, seated in the stern of the boat, and always in dread of a delay, watched the boatmen with some uneasiness.

'Look out!' cried one of them to his comrade.

The shout was occasioned by the new direction the boat was rapidly taking. It had got into the direct current and was being swept down the river. By diligent use of the poles, putting the ends in a series of notches cut below the gunwale, the boatmen managed to keep their craft against

the stream, and slowly urged it in a slanting direction towards the right bank.

They calculated on reaching it some five or six versts below the landing-place; but, after all, that would not matter so long as men and beasts could disembark without accident. The two stout boatmen, stimulated moreover by the promise of double fare, did not doubt of succeeding in this difficult passage of the Irtych.

But they reckoned without an incident which they were powerless to prevent, and neither their zeal nor their skilfulness could, under the circumstances, have done more.

The boat was in the middle of the current, at nearly equal distances from either shore, and being carried down at the rate of two versts an hour, when Michael, springing to his feet, bent his gaze up the river.

Several boats, aided by oars as well as by the current, were coming swiftly down upon them.

Michael's brow contracted, and an exclamation escaped him.

'What is the matter?' asked the girl.

But before Michael had time to reply one of the boatmen exclaimed in an accent of terror:

'The Tartars! the Tartars!'

They were indeed boats full of soldiers, and in a few minutes they must reach the ferryboat, it being too heavily laden to escape from them.

The terrified boatmen uttered exclamations of despair and dropped their poles.

'Courage, my friends!' cried Michael; 'courage! Fifty roubles for you if we reach the right bank before the boats overtake us.'

Incited by these words, the boatmen again worked manfully away, but it soon became evident

that they could not escape the Tartars.

It was scarcely probable that they would pass without attacking them. On the contrary, there was everything to be feared from robbers such as these.

'Do not be afraid, Nadia,' said Michael; 'but be ready for anything.'

'I am ready,' replied Nadia.

'Even to throw yourself into the water when I tell you!'

'Whenever you tell me.'

'Have confidence in me, Nadia.'

'I have, indeed!'

The Tartar boats were now only a hundred feet distant. They carried a detachment of Bokharian soldiers, on their way to reconnoitre round Omsk.

The ferryboat was still two lengths from the shore. The boatmen redoubled their efforts. Michael himself seized a pole and wielded it with superhuman strength. If he could land the tarantase and horses and dash off with them, there was some chance of escaping the Tartars, who were not mounted.

But all their efforts were in vain.

'Saryn na kitchou!' shouted the soldiers from the first boat.

Michael recognised the Tartar war-cry, which is usually answered by lying flat on the ground.

As neither he nor the boatmen obeyed this injunction, a volley was let fly amongst them, and two of the horses were mortally wounded.

At the next moment a violent blow was felt. The boats had run into the ferryboat.

'Come, Nadia!' cried Michael, ready to jump overboard.

The girl was about to follow him, when a blow from a lance struck him, and he was thrown

into the water. The current swept him away, his hand raised for an instant above the waves, and then he disappeared.

Nadia uttered a cry, but before she had time to throw herself

after him she was seized and dragged into one of the boats.

In a few minutes the boatmen were killed, the ferryboat left to drift away, whilst the Tartars continued to descend the Irtych.

(*To be continued.*)



QUIET NOOKS FOR THE HOLIDAY RAMBLER.

THE ROMANCE AND INDUSTRY OF THE GERMAN ALPS.

The longing for a German emperor, as the head of a united, free, and mighty Germany, is rooted deeply in the hearts of the whole people. This is evinced by the many imperial legends attached to northern and southern mountain peaks. For in its ballads and its legends a people expresses its innermost heart, its loves, its sorrows and hopes, its rewards and its punishments. The Kyffhäuser mountain rises out of the golden meadows of Thuringia, where Saxon dukes and kings once unfurled their banners; but it is not a Saxon, like the great Fowler, or his worthy son Otto, but a Swabian emperor, the Hohenstaufe Frederick Barbarossa, who has taken with him the might of the empire, and will reappear with it in due time.

A still grander locality for this legend is offered by the Untersberg, a mountain placed between Salzburg, Berchtesgaden, Reichenhall, and Hallein. It raises a marble dome over the hiding-place of a sleeping emperor, and once again it is no Hapsburg or Austrian emperor to whom the people look for resurrection: it is Charles the Great who slumbers here, and legend connects with his waking not only the saving of the empire, but the end of the world.

This sombre legend must in nowise be connected with the political plaints and sorrows of the people. We understand its origin when we have cast the first look at the Untersberg, and espe-

cially if we see it first from Salzburg. From its heaven-piercing crest down to the valley smiling in its thousand charms, the mountain rises in one ever-dark mighty mass, the only one around of such stern majesty; it does not break its descent by hillocks and inclines. When the full light of day transfigures all the heights around Salzburg; when the Hohe Göll shows its bold outlines; when the distant Tannen shine in wondrous colours, the Untersberg remains gray and dark with shadows. And even when the rays of the setting sun spread over the valley of Salzburg, gilding the foliage of the ancient forests, the giant gorge at the foot of the monster mountain is wrapped in shadow as before. Could a hopeful legend spring from such eternal defiant gravity! Like Barbarossa in the Kyffhäuser, the Emperor Charlemagne is seated at a table, which has become encircled twice by the length of his beard. When it shall have grown round it a third time, Antichrist will appear. On the Walser Fields between Salzburg and the Untersberg a great battle will be fought, and the last day will dawn.

How much gayer and ingenuous is the legend that still survives among the peasants of Bohemia and Austria—the belief that the Emperor Joseph is not dead, but will awake again to make his whole people happy! The mighty heart, how it would bleed for the sorrows of its empire!

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It is into the fairest gardens of this empire that the Untersberg looks down, as he raises his crest high above the plain of Salzburg. Like a true giant of fairy lore, he hides a tiny fairy world at his feet, a world where dwarfs work in the folds of his cloak, to give pleasure to the children of men. Let us visit these little worlds, that will show us the loveliest as well as the mightiest parts of the mountain.

We left stately Salzburg one splendid summer's morning. Traversing the 'Neue Thor,' and following the cliffs of the Ofenlochberg, we reached on our left the park of Castle Leopoldskron, a *château de luxe*, built by that Archbishop Leopold Firmian who is branded in history for his persecution of the Salzburg Protestants. From here up to a hillock near the Untersberg, on which Castle Glaneck offers a charming goal, spreads the so-called Leopoldskroner Moss, through which stretches a perfectly straight dyke of several miles in length. The only variety on this very monotonous fruit-tree avenue is offered by the abutting houses of the Moss colonists and of the Marien baths. Every step that brings us nearer to the grand mountain throne makes us more contented with our excursion, and an occasional glance into the distance, that reveals new pictures of loveliness, compensates for the yet distant Castle Glaneck.

At last the long straight line ends by the high beeches of the hillock. The trees surrounded the castle-walls like a lovely wreath, the sun glimmered softly through the thick foliage, the scent and shade of the wood were refreshing. Castle Glaneck offers an enchanting picture from all points of view, and therefore, perhaps, its possession was greatly

coveted at all times. When the first lords of Glaneck died out, a pious archbishop remembered that a punishment awarded them was unrequited. He therefore stretched out his benevolent hand, and took possession of the castle and its domains for his bishopric. It is now owned by a private gentleman. We did not regret our ascent of the hillock to the castle, because its whole surroundings, with its field-paths and its well-tended graceful trees, seemed to us a fitting introduction to the ancient forest-glades we were to reach half an hour later. It was the grand mountain forest at the marble foot of the Untersberg that enclosed us. The rustling of leaves and the rushing of streams make a wonderful music, that sounded now like distant singing, now like the laughter and chatter of merry girls. The balmy air refreshed us doubly through its freshness and through the scent of flowers and herbs by which it was penetrated. At last we reached the colony of the marble-millers, where Rupertus Steiner has set up an inn. We refreshed ourselves well, and penetrated into the gorge with renewed power. The Glau was rushing over its marble bed with all the vigour of an untrained mountain child as we threaded its sides and entered the twilight of the columned temple formed by the uprising forest.

It is here that a turn of the path and the stream suddenly brings us before mortal workmanship, which looks at first sight like the works of gnomes in the folds of a giant's cloak. In the midst of the powerful surging a little wheel-machine whirrs and spins with pretty rapidity, appearing like the harmless toy of little gnomes. We fancy we could check the whole affair with our

hands, it goes so easily ; and yet it exerts a power strong enough to change hard bits of marble into rounded balls. These are the marbles of our boyhood, in their original shape. Marbles, with their blue, gray, red, green, white, and yellow colours, are toys universally beloved ; little hands on each side of the ocean play with them, and have played with them for ages. How astonishing to find that these playthings stand under the protection of stern mountain spirits, who create such merry pastimes in such simple guise for mortal children !

As several of these mills were active we were able to examine them closely. Pieces of marble, destined to take a certain size, are placed in the circular and semicircular cavity of a fixed mill-stone, which is attached to a strong axle (known as the bed-stone) ; over this is placed a movable millstone (occasionally a wooden disc, the grinder-stone), containing a cavity corresponding in depth to that of the millstone, so that the bits of marble are completely enclosed. After these preparations, the mill-race, strengthened by the force of inclined pressure, sets the small wheel of the grinder-stone in motion, and with so much success that the tormented jets of water spurt and foam in circles around, grinding the marble first to awkward, then to more and more shapely balls. The grinder-stone does not rest till it has made all the marble pieces of one uniform neat round shape. Only then does it stand still ; that is to say, it is forced to stand still, when it can no longer dance about over marble balls, but meets its fellow, the bedstone. The miller knows what this means. He frees the grinder-stone from the wheel, or takes it from out the mill-race,

and delivers it from its treasures of coloured balls, putting new bits of marble in their place ; and again begins the old merry grinder-stone dance, first with hindrances, then with increasing ease. These concentric and congruent depressions in the bedstone and grinder-stone are formed by forcing iron balls round and round both stones until the grinder-stone stands still. Then the cavity is as certainly formed as later on the marbles at the same signal. There are times when the wild mountain stream brings down too many of its comrades into the little mossy nest lying between gray rocky masses, flooding the mills and hindering their labours ; but it does not hurt them, they are strong and can bear something.

There are about fifty of these mills in the gorge of the Glau, winding upwards by the steep woodland path that shows so invitingly in our illustration. Every step revealed new beauties, and the echo of that song, 'Thou glorious forest,' never left our brain. Ever-shifting and ever-new scenes were presented to us from between the trunks of mighty trees, the wondrous world of legend seemed nearer, the sun penetrated less often through the heavy leafy dome ; only occasionally did the eye greet the large blue arch of heaven. The pathway along the thundering cataracts of the Glau is not without danger, and must be trodden cautiously. It is wise not to rejoice too loudly while climbing, but to enjoy silently with heart and mind. We found ourselves enveloped in such contemplative silence. Not far from us a white woman stole past : was it a fair Moss lady ? We saw her snow-white falling veil, with its golden edge glimmering amid the dark green. Our prosaic guide maintained it was only the

spray of the foaming stream lighted by a stray gleam of sunshine. But the man clearly lacked the true faith in sprites.

We now found ourselves in a grotto, and looked down deep into the cradle of the Glau, where the giant child is ever born anew. Natural steps of marble led up to it. The water streams forth in faint golden masses between dark green walls. We think to hear song and music, now wild, now gentle, now broken with sighs, tears, and laughter. And yet the surface of the collected water lies so motionless before our eyes. At last we step down to it, and only then do we perceive the cause of that wild chorus, for the nearer we approach the louder grows the thunder of the invisible waterfall.

The water itself is of exquisite taste. It was beloved even by the pampered throats of the spiritual rulers of the land, for riding messengers had to fetch it daily for the archiepiscopal table ; and the people christened the grotto 'The Prince's Well,' thinking to do the spirit's realm an honour by the name.

Colour and sound play a mighty rôle in these rock and forest halls. Above us the leafy arcades shine fair and golden ; at our feet lie stern marble blocks, faintly covered with lichen and moss ; the sounds of rustling and water sobs are heard ; and the more the path inclines, the more the rocks narrow, the more mysterious and ghostly grow the music and romance of the mountain. When we have once more reached the foot of the monster, and step out again into the sunny plain, how silent and empty it seems around

us ! We look back in wonder on the marble mass, that extends on all sides in its grand and sombre majesty. We wonder how it is possible that this same mountain, so near, so palpable, can hide in its green cloak such splendid and magnificent pictures from our view.

Most tourists combine an ascent of the Untersberg with a visit to the marble-mills and the course of the Glau. We give over the adventurous reader to the care of Adolph Schaubach, the excellent guide of the German Alps, and cast a parting look over the highest point of the Untersberg, that commands Berchtesgaden. The Untersberg seems almost placed to be a stage commanding this Alpine world ; its peak commands all the chief valleys, the Wimbach and Hintersee lakes, as well as the rocky fortresses of the Königsee. The mountain giants stand in a semicircle, sure guardians, while in the north stretch the pale blue and golden lines of the plain, joining the horizon at the point where roads, canals, and railways unite the German lands, for whose sake the thundering cannons of 1866 ousted the ravens from the imperial mountain, and whence peoples and princes sent out their messengers to found a new, great, and united German Empire. And thus the imperial legends of the north and the south have become a truth ; around the Kyffhäuser a new Germany arises ; and from the Untersberg our glance, it is true, does not fall upon a dying world, but upon crumbling states that are re-uniting into a grander whole.





THE MARBLE MILLS OF THE GERMAN ALPS.

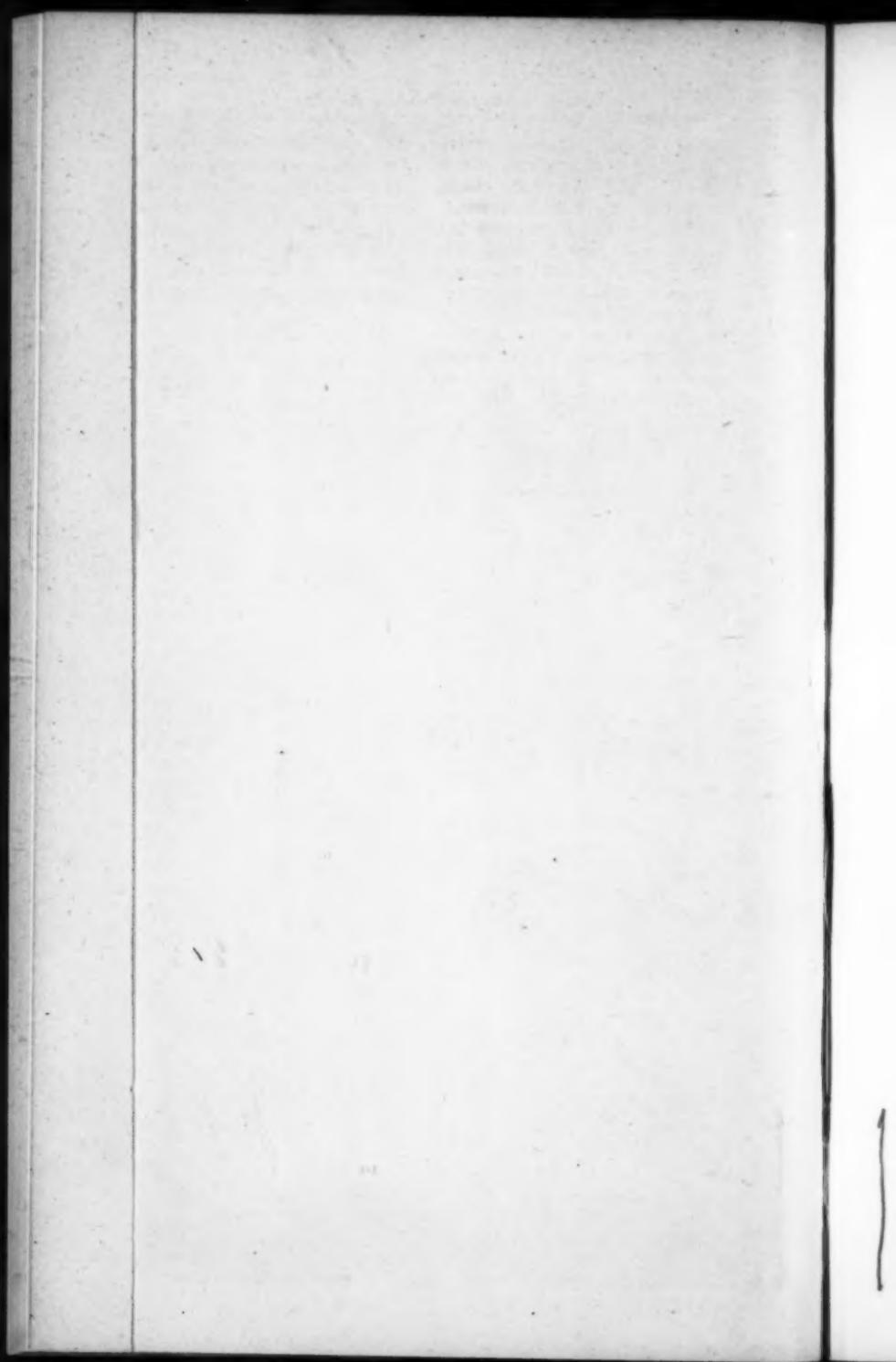
A SKETCH FROM NATURE ON THE UNTERBERG,

See 'Quiet Nooks for the Holiday Rambler.'

BY THE AUTHOR.

CHAP

JACK went home, strangely disquieted, true, and exact, said. He had the score, all of and mostly let go, love. Jack was in the present, enjoyed hard, for him just to of the Siren : time when his touch of her hair what had caused was not that he that he absolute she, though she realise the fact, over him ; there feeling of pity disgusted that he of a woman so unreal: he was had poured out feelings so freely he paced up and down, he thought lying near him, between them, when he thought had said to Mrs. should have been. Had he but known the possibility of any single never act at all. prerogative of human to know the future, there seems no committing which did chief to some one.



THIS SON OF VULCAN.

A Novel.

BY THE AUTHORS OF 'READY-MONEY MORTIBOY,' 'THE GOLDEN BUTTERFLY,' ETC.

PART II.

CHAPTER XVI.

JACK went home, with a mind strangely disquieted. It was all true, and exactly as Mrs. Merrion said. He had written letters by the score, all of them love letters, and mostly letters of passionate love. Jack was one who, living in the present, worked hard and enjoyed hard. It had been sweet for him just to be in the presence of the Siren : there had been a time when his brain reeled at the touch of her hand. Now—now—what had caused the change ? It was not that he loved her less, but that he absolutely loathed her : she, though she could not yet realise the fact, had lost her power over him ; there was not even a feeling of pity left. He was disgusted that he had been the prey of a woman so common and so unreal : he was ashamed that he had poured out his thoughts and feelings so freely and frankly : as he paced up and down the little room, he thought of the fair girl lying near him, with but a wall between them, and he groaned when he thought of the things he had said to Mrs. Merrion which should have been kept for Norah. Had he but known ! Did we know the possible consequences of any single act, we should never act at all. It is the blessed prerogative of human nature not to know the future. And since there seems no act that we can commit which does not do mischief to some one, there is every

reason to believe that the world would fall into a lethargy, and so our race gradually become extinguished, could we calculate the consequences. Those that Jack had to face were a bundle of letters with all that an angry woman could do. Jack was liable to be paraded in a court of law, his letters of passion read aloud, and his devotion laughed at. Most men would prefer a quiet five minutes or so under the nine-tailed cat, so that no one knew about it, to such ridicule. Jack certainly would have taken punishment with far more alacrity than the ridicule. He passed a bad night pondering over what he could do, and finally fell asleep after, for the hundredth time, assuring himself that nothing, not even public exposure, should make him keep his promise.

Norah met him at breakfast in the morning, her eyes ringed with black, her cheeks pale. She too had been lying awake, thinking, scheming, and regretting, listening to the tramp of Jack up and down his room, and knowing that there was another creature in the world as anxious as herself. That was, somehow, a comfort, because they were both anxious about the same thing. If one has a tooth-ache, one bears it better if somebody else in the house has one too. They compare the pangs, and together curse their fate.

They greeted each other with downcast eyes, as if they had sinned and were ashamed. Fancy

Adam and Eve waking up the morning after that fatal business of theirs—perhaps a little unwell in consequence of the change in diet, and certainly apprehensive of other consequences. Norah and Jack had plucked together the apple of love, and it was from a forbidden tree, because Jack had already gathered the fruit with another. Whatever Adam's shortcomings, in this, at least, he was better than Jack, that he had but one to share his guilt. Lilith came afterwards, if you remember.

Mr. Cardiff—or rather Arthur Vyvyan Dimsdale—was up before them, and, with mind intent on the importance of the task, was fashioning a model yacht which he proposed to sail in ponds some time during the spring.

' You shall show me how to sail her, Jack,' he said with the confidence of a boy in a senior's powers. ' I think she shall be cutter-rigged. The last one I had I sailed at the back of the Grange in . . . no—' he stopped and looked round. The only sign of his mental decay was that he sometimes confused places, and was pulled up short by finding himself not in the house where he was born, but quite a different place.

' Never mind the yacht now, Arthur,' said Norah. ' Let us have breakfast. Have you seen my father ?'

' Myles had his breakfast an hour ago,' said the boy, placing his toy on a chair, ' and I'm jolly hungry.'

In spite of his amazing twist, the old man did not venture to do a very great stroke of breakfast, but presently rose with a robust air and determined face, as one who was bent on enjoying the whole freedom of his holiday in running and jumping. Jack no-

ticed how his legs trembled as he ran from the room.

' Don't take any notice, Jack,' said Norah. ' It is better so. He is getting feebler every day.'

Presently he came back, and sat down wearily.

' Norah,' he said, after a pause, ' I wonder if I am going to die. I remember reading a story about a boy who died at thirteen. He used to get tired, and then sit down and fall asleep. And after a little he was too weak to get out of bed. And then he died.'

' You would not be afraid to die, Arthur, would you ?'

He thought for a moment.

' No, Norah, not afraid ; not that ; only I would rather live.'

She spent the morning in conversation over things high and solemn, while his eyes glowed with the light of faith and hope.

' If I live, Norah dear,' he said at last, taking her hand—' if I live, I will be a great preacher, and bring the world from wickedness. If I die . . .' he paused.

' If you die, Arthur.'

' If I die, I shall go to heaven, shall I not, Norah ?—and then we shall all meet, you and I and—and cousin Lucy—and—where is my cousin Lucy ?' He looked round with a dazed air, and then, closing his eyes, lay back gently on the sofa and fell fast asleep. As he lay there with a face out of which every crow's-foot had been smoothed, the long white hair falling back from his forehead, the lips half parted in a smile, there was a boyish look about him which was most curious.

Norah sat watching him. She had grown fond of this poor waif and stray of fallen humanity. He had been stricken at her very feet : reduced to a condition in which he could do no harm ; driven, perforce, back to a state of innocence ; passed through the waters

of Lethe, and made ignorant once more of evil. If for every sin into which manhood falls there is some animal which may be taken as its type and personification, then had Cardiff Jack been pig, wolf, tiger, and crocodile, each and all in turn, and now he was once more the bleating lamb.

Jack left them and went to see his old employer at the works. The men nodded to him in their independent and half respectful way. Mr. Hodder came from his den and timidly shook hands with him ; the furnaces, his old friends, seemed to fan themselves into a fierce heat, and the engines to puff and snort a welcome. The young man forgot his gloomy thoughts, and pulled himself together.

' Bah ! ' he said. ' Let her do what she likes. Let her publish all the letters. I will laugh with the rest. Here is work, which is better than love.'

All night he had been awake thinking of Norah and the other : now he shook off the troubles of his loves as he would have taken off his coat. Norah, at home, was sitting in sadness, wretched because Jack was wretched ; picturing him lonely in his grief and distracted from his usual work. Mrs. Merrion, selecting and reading his letters, was rejoicing over the misery she was going to bring upon him. And here he was, with light heart and unclouded brow, stepping into the works of Bayliss's iron-foundry, with his brain running undisturbed and in the usual channels. Mr. Bayliss was in his office. He looked up from the work he was engaged in, and gave Jack a friendly nod.

' Glad to see you back, Armstrong. Wait a moment . . . Now then, my lad, for an account of yourself.'

' I've been to Germany, and I've come back.'

' With empty hands ?'

' No ; with full hands. I can do it, Mr. Bayliss.'

Mr. Bayliss instinctively rose and shut the door.

' Now,' he said, ' let us have it out. I remember ! I remember. You were going to make English steel as good as Prussian. . . . I remember.'

' Yes ; and I can do it.'

' Supposing you can do it—taking you at your own valuation—what do you think your knowledge is worth ?'

' You shall see what I can do first. It is no secret, and if any one else can do it, let them. I experimented in Germany on English iron, and no one except myself could do it.'

' Is it no secret ? Is it only the old dodge of putting in the manganese ? Then, Armstrong, I think very little of your secret. Every body knows it.'

' Do they know how much manganese to put in ? Do they know the right time ? Can they make it a certainty ?'

' No.'

' I can, Mr. Bayliss,' Jack said, with a quiet air of assurance. ' I am going to make you an offer, subject to my doing what I pretend to do.'

' Go on.'

' My power, if it exists, will give the foundry, when it is exercised, a strength that no other works can hope for . . . will it not ?'

' Ay.'

' If you had the use of it, you could increase your power and name, and therefore your influence and position, to say nothing of your income, which is perhaps great enough already.'

' No man's income is great enough. I made a hundred

thousand last year, but I am not satisfied even with that.'

'I should help you to make more. These are my terms: You will give me a despotic control over the furnaces, always provided that I fulfil my promise to turn you out steel as good as any that can be made in Germany, and from Spanish as well as English iron—so long you will give me such a share in the business as shall guarantee me an income at least—'

He named boldly a very large sum.

Mr. Bayliss looked at him with admiration.

'And if I refuse?'

'Then I go to Captain Perry-mont. If he refuses, I go to London, and start a company which will build a foundry here.'

'You young viper!' Mr. Bayliss replied. 'Would you bite the hand that nursed you?'

Jack laughed.

'I have been brought up in your works, Mr. Bayliss. It is a hard school. I mean to be rich. I am grateful to you for a good many things, but chiefly for the lesson that a man who likes to push himself on can get on. I am one who pushes. My father, from all I understand, was one who was pushed.'

'Ay,' said Bayliss, 'you are right there; Johnny was a good deal pushed... When do you want to make your experiments?'

'When you please.... Now... if you please.'

Not that day only, but several days afterwards, Jack experimented in the foundry. He was within the truth when he boasted of the possession of an invaluable power. He had watched the molten metal so long that he knew every mood, so to speak, of the iron, and could read it as no one else could. Everybody knew that

to improve the English steel the addition of manganese was necessary. What nobody knew except Jack was the quantity, varying with the quality of the metal, that had to be put in, and the time to put it in. And he knew it. Therefore he was invaluable. For if you put in too much, or too little, or at the wrong time, you spoil the whole.

Bayliss and his foreman Hodder watched and inspected. There was no secret, as Jack told them, only he was the only man in the world who could do it.

'What do you think, Hodder?'

'Well, sir, if I might be so bold, I should say take him at his own price, and it will be a cheap bargain.'

CHAPTER XVII.

'COME over and see me. I cannot believe that you are as cruel and as false as you profess to be. Come and tell me so once more before I act; or come and tell me that it is all a horrid dream, and that you are still my own Jack, as I am still your own loving and most miserable ADELAIDE.'

This was the letter which was handed to Jack by Keziah, who accosted him on his way home.

'Here's a letter for you, Mr. Armstrong,' she said.

He took it and read it under a gas-lamp. Then he tore the missive into small pieces and gave them back to her.

'That is my answer, the only answer I have to give her, except this: Tell her that she may act as she thinks proper. I have nothing else to say. Good-night to you, Mrs. Bastable.'

The woman received the fragments, and solemnly deposited them in a capacious side-pocket.

'Don't say good-night, Jack

Armstrong,' she whispered, looking furtively across the road. 'Stay and have a word or two with me.'

'I have nothing to say to you.'

'No; but I have a good deal to say to you, Jack Armstrong. It isn't that I knew you when you were a little boy, and had you in the house, and kissed you a dozen times a day, pretty little boy that you were. That's nothing, because I didn't even know your name, nor who was your father. Lord! if I had known.'

'Well, Mrs. Bastable, and if you had known?'

'I always loved you, even then. And if you'll believe me, a middle-aged, respectable, deserted wife, I love you still. And I'd help you if I could.'

'But I am afraid you cannot.'

'I could, and I would. I told Miss Norah that I would, only I want you to tell me what *she's* done.' This with a jerk of the head in the direction of Laburnum Villa, to signify that it was Mrs. Merrion she meant.

'You live with her,' said Jack. 'You learn her secrets, I suppose. Why do you want to ask me anything?'

'She's not a good lot, my cousin Jenny,' said Mrs. Bastable. 'And she keeps her secrets mostly to herself.'

'Your cousin—Jenny? Who is your cousin Jenny?'

'There . . . then . . . my poor tongue . . . I mean Mrs. Merrion of course—Adelaide.'

'Oh!'

'That is, she calls herself Adelaide. Jack Armstrong, don't tell her I told you, but her name's Jenny, as Miss Norah knows already. Jenny she was christened, and Jenny she'll die, whatever she calls herself. Now, then, tell me all about it.'

Jack looked at her.

'If you know what you profess to know, you will be able to tell me something. I've got nothing to tell you, except that I was a young fool, and she made me think I was in love with her.'

'She always does. She makes all the men in love with her. She's made more fools than any woman of her age in the world. Bless you, is that all?'

'But she's got letters of mine.'

'She's got letters from dozens. Lord! you're only one fool among many—the biggest fool, perhaps, because you've fallen in love with a woman old enough to be your mother, when there's lots of young girls in Esbrough as would jump at you. For shame, Jack Armstrong! When your father fell in love, it was with a handsome young wench like me—as I was then—or else with a sweet pretty lady like your poor mother.'

'A fool I was, no doubt,' said Jack. 'And now I know it.'

'Don't be afraid, Jack Armstrong. Don't mind what she says. She barks, but she don't dare bite. There's them behind as holds her back. As for letters, she's got letters from Mr. Bayliss, and from Captain Perrymont, and . . . and . . . all the old fools in the place. What's she to do with your letters?'

This was comfort to Jack.

'Can you get her to give them back?' he asked.

'No, I can't. She locks them all up in her davenport, and there they are. She won't give them back for all my asking. Jack, have nothing more to say to her, and don't be afraid of her. She sha'n't harm you, whatever mischief she does.'

'Mr. Bayliss? Captain Perrymont? do you mean that they write to her?'

'Captain Perrymont hasn't written for a month and more. I think

he's broke off. Mr. Bayliss always comes, regular, once a week.'

'Good heavens ! She told me she had never seen him even, and did not know him by sight.'

'Jenny and lies means much the same thing,' said Mrs. Bastable. 'Though she *is* my cousin.'

'And who was General Merrion ?'

Mrs. Bastable looked round again. Then she whispered in his ear, hoarsely :

'There never was no General Merrion.'

'No General Merrion ?'

'She never had a husband at all. She's a single woman.'

'Then,' said Jack coolly, 'she's a considerably more artful woman than I took her for. Suppose, Mrs. Bastable—suppose she was to bring an action against me, would you be prepared to prove this in the witness-box ?'

'I'd prove that, and plenty more, if she tries to harm you. And I've told her so, only she won't believe it. Ah ! she's a wilful woman, a wicked woman.'

'Then why do you live with her ?'

'Because I can't help it. Because I'm tied to her. Because I'm the only person in the world that cares for her and isn't afraid of her. And because I mind the old days when Jenny was a pretty young slip of a thing, good and innocent, and thought of nothing but a bit of ribbon or some coloured rag to set off her beauty. Ah ! you gentlemen, you think we women haven't got any hearts. What does it matter to me that Jenny hasn't turned out so quiet and good as the rest of the family ? Blood's thicker than water ; and I mean to look after her, if all the world gives her up.'

'I believe you're a kind-hearted woman,' said Jack. 'And now I'll tell you something about it. I was only eighteen, and she turn-

ed my brain. One night, after I'd been telling her that I loved her and all the rest of the nonsense, she got me to write her a promise of marriage. She wrote it, and I signed it. I would have signed anything then. Then Norah came, and I saw what a fool I had been. All day long, you see, I was at work and thinking of my work ; and in the evening she made a fool of me.'

'Same as she does to all of them. Lord ! what creatures men are, to be sure. Made a fool of you, indeed ! Why couldn't you fall in love with Miss Bayliss, now, if you wanted a pretty girl ?'

'I don't know.'

'Well, I'm glad you didn't. You've got a sweet girl and a lovely girl now : and if you are not kind to her, Jack Armstrong, I'll never forgive you, as sure as my name's Keziah Bastable.'

'Of course, I shall be kind to Norah,' he replied.

'Ah ! there's different sorts of kindnesses. I've known men that were kind to their wives who'd beat them with sticks if they got into a rage.'

'My good soul, be rational.'

'And their wives loved them all the same, poor bleeding lambs ! I've known men who were kind to their wives, but never asked themselves if the poor things were happy, nor what they wanted, and saw them pine away for want of a little thought. And I've known men who were kind to their wives, or said they were, when they'd given them a comfortable house, and let them alone by themselves the long day, and sometimes the long night. Don't you do that, Jack Armstrong. You're masterful and she's loving ; you're strong and she's trustful. You've won away her heart, poor thing, and she believes you're an angel from heaven. Think of her after you've

married her, Jack Armstrong. Think of the wife that wants to tell you everything, and put all her thoughts into your heart, and don't be wrapped up for ever in your wheels and your engines. It wasn't for nothing that you were born in a foundry, when the furnace was roaring and the engine blowing and the chimneys smoking. I was there, and the first thing as ever you did was to stretch out your tiny fist to the fire and clutch at it. And the doctor says, "Let's have a look at this son of Vulcan!" I said then, for I was a prophet before I was a witch and had familiar sperruts—I said, "It's a great man he's going to be, give him the chance." A beautiful baby you were, much too beautiful to live. But don't be carried away with your cleverness, Jack. Don't neglect your wife to make a little money. Have faith, and give her your evenings at least, and let her thoughts be your thoughts. I am but a foolish woman, and a sinful witch and a clairvoyong, but I can't bear to think of your father's son doing anything but what's right."

She seized his hand and held it for a moment. The tears were running down her homely cheeks, but his big bright eyes looked at her full, with an intentness which brought back the days when he was a boy, and she stood transformed, waiting for the silent summons to the mesmeric room.

Then she left him : but returned again in a moment.

"I've got something more on my mind. Let me talk to you tomorrow. Now I must get back to Jenny. It's the time when she wants her brandy and water."

Jack went home. In Norah's room were only herself and Myles, for 'the boy' had been sent to bed. Myles was silent and sub-

dued, as he had been for some months—since, in fact, his disappointing tour in the provinces.

Jack sat down between them fronting the fire. Norah was on the right, a book in her hands, but not reading; and Myles on the left, nursing his knee and gazing into the coals.

And so all three were silent. Norah lifting a corner of her eyes to Jack when he was sitting near her, his foot actually touching her dress, a mode of personal contact which, distant as it was, refreshed her soul.

"Myles," said Jack, after a long pause, "we are very silent tonight."

"We are, Jack. Norah, ala-unah, 'tis dull you'll be.'

She shook her head.

"Myles, do you remember how you used to tell us stories, Norah and me, in the old days? There was Pettigo and Ennis fair, and Connemara wakes, and Connaught fights. Do you ever think of them now?"

"Never, Jack; 'twas in the ould bad daya. Norah knows all about it. I tould her myself."

"I've forgotten, father," said Norah.

"So have I, Myles," said Jack. "It was not to bring them up in your mind that I asked if you remembered the stories. Only I thought I would tell you one, if you would like to hear it."

"Sure I would," said Myles languidly, "if Norah would."

Jack looked at her and began clearing his throat.

"About a thousand years ago, or it may be two thousand, because the books have got confused, and so the dates are all as wrong as the repealer's facts."

"Jack, ye're takin' advantage," said Myles, waking up.

"Well, then, it doesn't matter how long ago. But there were

once a girl and a boy. The boy's name was John, but they called him Jack.'

'Aha!' cried Myles, revived and alert. 'May I have my pipe in here, Norah asthore? That's my dear girl. And now, Jack, the story. The colleen's name was Norah.'

'Of course.'

'Av course. When ye're done blusheen', my princess of Pettigo, where you ought to have been born, give me a shavin' of paper for a pipelight. Go on, Jack, 'tis a mighty fine story.'

'They were brought up by a kind-hearted man, who was the girl's father.'

'He was a dhrunken scoundrel,' said Myles. 'I knew him well. That is, I didn't; but my great-grandfather fifty hundred times removed, who was then the King of Ennis, often said he'd live to be hanged.'

'His Majesty was not always a prophet to be depended on,' said Jack. 'Well, things happened so that, after the little maid was five years old and the boy was nine, or thereabouts, this good man had to give them up, in order to get them educated. The girl went off to stay with a Saxon princess, not so beautiful as she was good—'

'Thru, Jack; gospel thru.'

'And the boy with a priest who wore a white robe on Sundays and read books all the week, and was the best man that ever lived. Don't interrupt, Myles. Well, the boy, a selfish conceited young dog, took to reading books too, and was never so happy as when he was reading books and learning to make things out of iron and steel. And he never, or hardly ever, gave a thought to the little maid at all.'

'O Jack!' said Norah.

'A more selfish boy never lived.

Meantime the little girl was growing up too. She grew up so beautiful that everybody fell in love with her, and the angels were jealous of her.'

Myles took his pipe out of his mouth, and, with the courtesy of a Castalian, stepped across the hearthrug, just one short step and a bit, and kissed his daughter's hand.

'I'd like to see the angel that could come up to her,' he said, resuming his seat, with a smile of blissful content. 'Go on, Jack; it's a beautiful story.'

'The angels were jealous of her,' Jack repeated.

'Don't, Jack,' Norah murmured.

'When she sang it was like playing on the strings of your heart.'

'It was, it was,' said Myles.

'And when she spoke it was like music. Her hair was black, and she had dark blue eyes, so dark as to look almost black at first.'

'Jack, I forbid you to go on with your description,' cried Norah, blushing again. 'If you have no story to follow, I will get up and go to bed.'

'Wait—I am coming to the story. The girl became a woman, and everybody said she was fit to be a queen—'

'Jack!'

'And what was better, she had never forgotten the boy she used to play with. Every year when her father came to see her she used to ask after Jack; and all the year round she used to think about him; he all the time never thinking about her at all.'

'That was because he was learning to make himself clever,' said Norah, 'and had something else to do.'

'Don't go beyond the story, Norah. Well, the boy became a young man and went to live with

Myles, little Norah's father, and worked in the king's foundries, where he made machines and engines and all sorts of wonderful things, and thought at first about nothing but getting rich. But he made the acquaintance of a lady who was dressed in velvets and silks, and who called herself a princess, though she was nothing, really, but a common kitchen-maid, as every true princess would see at a glance; but she was clever, and knew how to deceive people, and make them think that they were in love with her.'

Then Myles turned very red. But Norah didn't notice him, because she was looking shyly at Jack, and she was trembling.

'She got hold of the young man when he was only eighteen, and used to make him sit with her of an evening. She played to him, and sang to him, gave him delicate little dinners dressed daintily for him, and one night, when they were all alone, she made him sit at her feet and say he loved her.'

'She's a witch,' groaned Myles.

'Then she made him write her letters. Not one letter, but hundreds, in which the boy, who knew hardly any other woman, told her over and over again all his fancied love.'

'Poor Jack!' said Myles.

'So it went on, and nothing happened for a time. Then the colleen came home to her father; and at sight of her and at speech with her, the foolish fancy flew out of that young man's heart like a dream of the night. He feared that all his imagined love was a delusion, and that the woman, the pretended princess, could be nothing in the world to him. He told her so. She laughed at him, told him that it was a passing whim, and dared him to break it off. So he was afraid. But then, bit by bit, he saw, talking

to the colleen every day, what true love meant; he saw what a woman should be, and what life might be made with such woman by his side. And then, overpowered by passion, one day, Myles, he did what he ought not to have done—he told the girl, the Princess Norah, that he loved her, but that he was engaged to another woman.

'Hush, Norah, hush, my pretty,' cried Myles, holding the girl to his heart, as she half stepped, half knelt across to him, and fell into his arms. 'Don't cry, alaunah. Sure 'tie the most beautiful story that ever I heard. Go on, Jack; lend more power to your elbow.'

'Then he went away. While he was abroad his heart was full of Norah. He thought about her every day and all the night. He learned to loathe the name of the other woman. He came home, and a second time he told his Norah all the sad story. Then he went to the other woman and told her. Again she laughed in his face, tried to cajole him, and then she threatened him. He left her at last, declaring that, do what she might, he would never set foot in her house again.'

'And then, Jack?' asked Myles.

'That's all, Myles,' he said. 'Forgive me, and tell us that we may love one another.'

Myles did not answer, but the tears came into his eyes and trickled down his seamed and worn cheeks. Norah stayed where she was. Presently he raised her, and taking her hand, laid it in the great brown fist that belonged to Jack.

'Whom should she marry but you, Jack? would she be my own daughter, my Norah, if she did not love you better than herself?'

And then, with great presence of mind, Myles left them together.

CHAPTER XVIII.

'I OFFER you, Armstrong, a handsome salary, dependent on results,' said Mr. Bayliss, in his own private office, 'but no partnership. You shall work this power of yours to my advantage, and no other's. That is my offer.'

'Then I refuse it,' said Jack.

'Very well. Go now, and see what Perrymont will do.'

'That is what I intend to do.'

'I took this boy,' said Bayliss, putting his hands into his pockets, and looking ahead as if he were addressing posterity, 'when he had not a penny and knew nothing. I trained him. I gave him employment. I taught him his trade. And now I offer him a handsome salary—a handsome salary. He turns upon me, like the worm, and goes to Perrymont.'

'It is true that you took me as a boy,' said Jack, 'and for nothing. It is also true that if my father were living, he would be your partner still, and you would be only half as rich as you are now.'

A random shot, but it hit between wind and water. Bayliss changed colour.

'I had nothing to do with might-have-beens. I am a practical man. I have had small opportunities, and I have had great ones. But I never let one slip. You, Armstrong, are one of my small ones.'

'On the contrary,' said Jack, 'I am one of your great ones.'

'Are you here to bully me, or am I here—'

'To bully me? Neither, Mr. Bayliss. I am here having proved myself the possessor of a power that will make me rich. You offer to make me a servant. I will not be a servant. I intend to be a

master. If not a master in your works, then in other's. You know that I am not friendless.'

'You may go to Perrymont,' said Bayliss. 'Come back if you like, when you have seen him. My offer is still open. O, there is one other thing. Your eccentric friend, Mr. Myles Cuolahan.'

'Your associate in old days.'

'That is an infernal lie, if he said so,' burst out the *parvenu*. 'I say it is an infernal lie. Tell him I said so.'

'I think I had better not. It is the truth, and you know it. He was an associate of yourself and of my father, when you all drank together, and were proud of being the friends of the last Armstrong left in Esbrough, poor though he was.'

'We are proud of our family, then, among other things. Jack Armstrong, you will eventually bring yourself to the devil.'

'Perhaps. Good-evening, Mr. Bayliss.'

Bayliss, left alone, began with the marvellous rapidity which was his strong point to make estimates and plans. 'He would bring thirty thousand a year to the concern. Would it be worth while to let him have his terms? Son of my old partner. Esbrough will never forget that. How the old things strike and crop up again—crop up again.' He fidgeted in his chair. 'Bah! as if anything would hurt me that might crop up. There are those papers at the banker's. They have had them for fifteen years. I will fetch them out, and destroy them. Then, if they are asked for, I can say they are lost; and the Bank knows they were once in existence. I will burn them all. Fool that I was! And yet the safety of it. And it was the making of me.'

When a certain fear came over him his form seemed to shrink,

and his full round face suddenly became crossed with dimples.

'It was the making of me. They wanted to know if I was a responsible man. I showed them the papers. The land was mine by deed of transfer, signed, witnessed and all; signed by me, witnessed by the old clerk Kislingbury, dead and comfortably out of the way, and the fellow Bastable, the rogue whom I sent away—abroad. He has never come back since. The land was mine, and the vein was mine; all the rest was easy. Paul Bayliss, my boy, such acts are like rebellions. If they are successful, they are great strokes of policy. If they fail, they are great crimes. Mine has not failed. It has prospered. I defy the Fates to do me any harm. To-morrow I get the papers out of the bank, and I destroy them. There are no copies. Who can swear to a forge—to a signature when there is no signature to swear to? And if my word is not as good as Bastable's, even if he is living, which is not likely, what is the world coming to? Paul Bayliss is a millionaire. Paul Bayliss is a justice of the peace. Paul Bayliss shall be a baronet before he is done. Baronet? By Gad, he shall be a baron—first Lord Esbrough, and shall pass his title on through his daughter to his grand-children. Men must take their opportunities, or must make them.'

Here a knock came to the door. It was Hodder.

'I beg your pardon, sir. Can I have five minutes?'

Mr. Bayliss, who had been walking up and down the room with his great shock of brown hair a good deal dishevelled, ran his fingers through it, and instantly assumed his magisterial air.

'I was making a few trouble-

some calculations, Hodder. But go on—go on. What is it?'

'I am afraid, sir, that I have discovered a bad business.'

Mr. Bayliss took out his watch.

'Five minutes only. Come to the point.'

'Smith has forged a cheque.'

'Forged a cheque! Do you mean to tell me that an *employé* of mine has forged—actually forged—a cheque?'

He filled himself out and gruffed his cheeks, like an offended turkey-cock.

'I am sure of it,' said Hodder.

He gave him a paper.

'That is not my signature, and a clumsy imitation. Hodder, it is a wicked world! I had confidence in Smith. Was not his salary increased last January?'

'It was, sir. Ten pounds.'

Bayliss looked at him, and at the cheque.

'Ten pounds. We try to help them who work for us, Hodder, and this is our reward. This is . . . our . . . reward. Well, . . . well.'

Hodder began to stammer.

'I brought it to you, sir, at once.'

'Of course.'

'And . . . and . . . if I might speak a word for the poor fellow.'

'Speak, Hodder.' Mr. Bayliss seated himself. 'I am a magistrate, but forget that. Say all you can.'

'He is recently married. His wife is ill. He thought, perhaps, that he could replace the amount, or get a real cheque or something. He is in dreadful misery of mind. If you would only pass it over.'

'Hodder, how many men have I got in my employ?'

'I don't know, sir, within fifty or so.'

'There are many hundreds at least, as you *do* know. I should think your zeal in my service

might have led you to know accurately how many there are, if only to show the importance of the works. But let that pass. If we let this one wrong act go unpunished, it will be an inducement to others to do the same. A. B. is hard up—A. B. steals. We are to have pity on A. B. No, Hodder. I am sorry—I am more than sorry. Smith has a wife, and he belongs to a respectable family. It will be a bitter blow to them, but it is a blow that must be dealt in mercy to the others. Let every one on these works, on Paul Bayliss's works, know that, if he is in distress, he may come to the master. But if he steals, the law must take its course. Forger ! And on my works.'

Hodder was silent. This was grandeur.

'Prosecute, Hodder. Put the thing out of my hands at once. I am a witness, I suppose, because this signature is mine. You have spoiled my dinner, Hodder.'

Hodder went out. In his own office was a young man, little more than a boy, with white face and trembling limbs. 'It won't do, Smith,' said Hodder. 'Damn him ! He is as hard as nails. We are to prosecute.'

'O, my poor wife !' groaned the miserable forger. 'Who will tell her ?'

'There's a chance,' whispered Hodder. 'Take the train to Hull. Take the steamer—one of our own iron steamers—to Spain. It goes to-night. Then you can get across, somehow, to South America. They won't look for you. When you are there, with an assumed name, write to me here, when no one will suspect, and I will send you your wife. Get away quietly, and I will give you four-and-twenty hours' start, and tell your wife something that will put her off the scent. I'm not a rich man,

but here is something to help you as far as Spain. You may get a passage for nothing if you make out that you are going for the firm, but don't try it on if you can help it.'

'God bless you for ever !' cried the man. 'And you will not tell my wife all ?'

'Nothing. Only, if there is a row, we will make her believe that your man did it. Now write her a line quick, and be off.'

At five o'clock Hodder presented himself again to his employer.

'Have you got a warrant out for Smith's business, sir ?'

'I thought it was your business, Hodder. Well get one at once.'

'Yes, sir, as soon as I can. I suppose to-morrow will be time enough for the arrest ?'

'Well, when Smith comes to-morrow he will be met by what he little expects.'

Hodder sighed.

'Yes, sir. If every one had his deserts—'

'What the devil do you mean, Hodder ?'

Bayliss faced him with an expression so savage that the foreman only stammered and walked out.

When, next morning, it was discovered that Smith was missing, Bayliss heard the news from Hodder, and told him to institute a search. But as Hodder did nothing, and as other events occurred, Smith got off free. In fact, a few months later, Smith returned to Esbrough, after a visit to Paraguay, and took away his wife, bearing still, so to speak, his sword. The moral of which is, not that you are to forge a cheque when you are hard up, dear young friend, starting in life, because that is wicked ; nor is it that you are to help the wicked man to turn

away from the consequences of his wickedness, because that is compounding of felony ; nor that you are to let off your servants when they err and trespass, because that is the weakness of generosity ; but it is . . . ‘ He may run who reads,’ and we will not spoil the story by adding the moral.

Jack went to Captain Perrymont. The Captain heard him at full length.

‘ I see your drift, my boy,’ he said. ‘ I should like to help you because you are an Armstrong. But I cannot, because I have made up my mind to have nothing to do with new things. I am rich enough, and so is my son. The devil of it is that we can’t help getting richer. Where the fortunes of the Perrymonts and the Baylisses will end, Lord knows. I’m ashamed to see the money pouring in, and we not knowing what to do with it.’

‘ Well, sir. Then you will have nothing to say to me.’

‘ Everything to say to you. I like you. Frank likes you. Come and dine as often as you please, and the oftener the better. But I won’t make myself richer by your means.’

Jack went away as sad as the young man who was bidden to sell all he had.

He had got a great thing : a power which no other man possessed, he looked to it for the establishment of his own fortune with all the collateral issues that a generous and unselfish man could see springing therefrom. He had returned with a sudden confidence and exultation. And this was the result : Paul Bayliss would make him a servant, and Captain Perrymont would have nothing to do with him at all. The inventor who has worked out an idea that no one will back up, though it would regenerate civiliza-

sation ; the young fellow who has got a carpet-bag full of poems which no one will publish ; the novelist who has a romance that no one will buy ; the dramatist who has a play that no one will act,—all these together would not make up the disappointment that filled poor Jack’s breast as he left Perrymont and walked quietly away.

People met him and shook hands. Frank Perrymont shouted to him across the street ; he mechanically answered and passed on. That morning he had been a rich man, able to marry his Norah. He was now a poor man. That morning he had been successful. He was now ruined. Presently there met him Mr. Bayliss himself. He was walking slowly down the street, looking out, in fact, for Jack’s return.

He beckoned him.

‘ Well, Armstrong, what says Perrymont ?

‘ He says . . . in fact, he will have nothing to do with me.’

‘ Good. Now I make you my offer over again.’

‘ And I refuse it. I will be no mere servant.’

‘ You talked of setting up a company here. You can try, of course. But see what they would say in London of a company in opposition to Paul Bayliss.’

‘ I can wait,’ said Jack. ‘ But I will work my power yet, and from my own hand too.’

‘ Try to work it here, my young Jack, and you will have Paul Bayliss against you at every turn. There is not a man in all this place that does not belong to me somehow or other. Look at that man across the street. You see how he takes off his hat to me. He owes me nothing. I have never given him a penny. Yet he is obsequious, because I could, if I pleased, smash him. I

could smash them all if I liked. Those who get in my way I do smash. If you get in my way I smash you. Remember that in Esbrough I am king, and I mean to be king. You may be one of my subjects, and if you do your duty you will be paid for it. I rule here, and now make war with me if you dare.'

He strode off, puffing his cheeks like some infuriated bubbly-jock in a stableyard, leaving Jack on the curbstone, half amused and half savage. Scrape the rust off the man who has 'made himself' manners as well as money, and you find, below, the man as he was before he was made. Paul Bayliss was as coarse, as self-seeking, as vulgar, in those days of splendour, as when he was the beggarly partner in a ruinous scrap-iron factory, and got drunk whenever he could spare five shillings or borrow that sum from poor Johnny Armstrong.

'War!' said Jack. 'Well, let us have war. I will go and see Mr. Fortescue. Perhaps he is too big for me.'

Then the humorous side of the thing seized him, and he went home laughing as he walked, so that the sentimental girls who met him thought their Jack was frivolous, and all the frivolous girls thought their Jack was charming. In among the women of all classes and all ages, from Ella, ruling sovereign of beauty,

to the humble factory girl, there was the unanimity of opinion—Jack Armstrong was the production of which Esbrough might chiefly boast; and Jack was, so far as was known, free, Norah Cuolahan being, presumably, a sister only. It was true that he went to Mrs. Merrion's, but so did a good many people. And she was old enough to be his mother.

'There goes Jack Armstrong.'

'I like him best when he is meditating in church,' said Ethel the pensive; 'his noble brow is marble white. Did you ever see him smile? Oh—h! It makes you understand the curving lips that the novelists talk about.'

'I like him best,' said Fanny the flirt, 'when he's laughing and talking. Did you ever waltz with him? Oh—h! It makes you understand being held up tight, like Ouida talks about.'

'There goes Jack Armstrong.'

'I call that a man, girls,' said Poll, one of the hands. 'He don't fool about. He works like a man, and he fights like a man, and he treats a pretty girl like a man. Lord! he's chucked me under the chin a dozen times. Glad to see you back again, Handsome Jack.'

'How are you, Poll? How are you all, girls?' answered Jack, at the same time taking off his hat to Ethel and Fanny.

THE SEASIDE OVER THE WAY.

PART I.

BLANKENBERGHE.

THE close of the London season has always something melancholy about it to old as well as young, from the universal departure of one's gay and pleasant friends, the leave-taking, the farewell, spoken perhaps for the last time. We forget how often we have longed for a little quiet when overwhelmed with engagements, and bored by all the bustle of our busy life; we forget that we have often wished some of our friends would go to Congo or Kamtschatka, or even a nearer place; and as we see them depart one by one, north, south, east, and west, we feel sad; we reflect that some of us may never meet again, and who will be missing? which of us before the next gay season comes round will have taken the longest journey, to that far-off land which must always be travelled alone? Often, alas, the youngest or the best-loved; for not always those who should go first, according to our notions, do so. No, some people always come back; and in November, when every one you would like to see is absent, you are sure to find them. Twenty or thirty years ago people did not go away in this wholesale fashion. The wealthy, the landed proprietor, the would-be fashionable, and those who had young children, went out of town—some early, some late; but many people's houses were open all the year

round. Now, at the end of August or September, if you want to be married, or buried, or cured, or killed, teeth put in or teeth taken out, you must just wait; if you want a lodging the mistress is absent, the servant-girl does not know the rent—so you may wait in the street three days for the answer; if you want a servant no one applies for your situation—you must wait till *they return to town*. Mudie's books are all gone to the country too. The only things that don't go are the cats. Our street seemed to be the abode of every unpleasant London variety of this animal. They sat on our door-step and window-ledges, played about in dozens in our street, which is a *cul-de-sac*, all day, and made such unearthly noises all night that repose and rest were impossible; if we had not settled to go too, we must have done so: the cats, I believe, would have eaten us up, they looked so awfully hungry, when we returned from a round of gay visits for two days to the metropolis, to leave our finery behind, and take up our common clothes and comfort.

The question had been put to me not by one but by fifty friends:

‘Where are you going?’

We answered to M. or N., as the case might be:

‘Where we can have three things: sea-bathing, bracing air, and perfect rest.’

Then Scarborough, Filey, Lowestoft, Aldborough, fifty places were mentioned and recommended.

‘No,’ we answered, ‘our place

is not in England ; nothing here is dull enough to scare away one's friends. We must have rest—

Rest from walking,
Rest from talking,
Rest from dressing—

and we must cross the water to find that.'

Blankenberghe, where we had been two or three times, it is true is not a very quiet place now, and people are wonderfully smart there ; but then we do not know them. We like to look at them, and do not care if they think us shabby and dowdy. They amuse us without our talking to them, and there the sea is at your very door, and the air on the hottest summer-day is so fresh and reviving ; still we wanted something duller than Blankenberghe, and we found it at Heyst, at Nieuport les Bains, and at Rosen-dael. But a few words about the first-mentioned place, which, as it yearly becomes more fashionable, may on that account have attractions for those who like to follow in other people's tracks, and do not mind paying for having places discovered and made comfortable for them. After all they are right ; the places the world prefers are generally the best—pleasantest, healthiest. Look at Brighton, Folkestone, Eastbourne, with their sunny aspects and clear air. And so with Blankenberghe, long nothing but a fishing-village, with limited accommodation. Some quiet portion of the continental sea-bathing population, driven away from Ostend by high prices and doubtful company, tried the little place, at that time consisting only of the houses and hotels behind the Dyke or sea-wall, which now, levelled and paved with small oblong bricks, makes one of the most beautiful promenades to be found in any country, and which is daily being extended

and reclaimed from the sand-hills.

Upon this Dyke now stand the principal hotels and lodging-houses. As at Ostend, the streets terminate in flights of steps ; and when one mounts them after a hot journey, and breathes the light exhilarating air, the feeling of refreshment to those who come from the heavy air of London in August is worth crossing the water to experience.

The houses on the Dyke having a north aspect are always cool on the seaside, and form also a long line of shade, under the protection of which one can sit out on the hottest day, enjoying the cool northern breezes, whilst the sands and sea are a flood of golden light. These same sands in the season are full of life and movement. Bathing in these regions seems to go on all day, except at dinner-time, when, as the visiting population are almost all boarded in pensions and hotels, the one-o'clock *table-d'hôte* calls every one in. About four o'clock, when people have discussed their coffee, innumerable croquet-parties are formed on the sands, which are smooth and hard enough and roomy enough to admit of the game being played to any extent. Groups of mothers and nurses and children are dotted about ; donkeys and their riders pass to and fro, and a band of music on the promenade attracts a certain number. Sometimes a volunteer or military band from a neighbouring town pays the place a visit, and play themselves in from the station to the Plage. On one such occasion, when the visitors were preceded and followed by a mob of boys and idlers, one little ragged urchin of six, with dark laughing eyes, but not a shoe to his foot, danced the whole length of the Digue in

front of the performers, keeping perfect time, throwing his arms aloft, and inventing steps that would have delighted a ballet-master, as he advanced in front of the music. Never did I see anything so graceful, so joyous, so perfectly delightful, as this little rascal's dancing. I longed for a Tidy to see him, and put him into a companion picture to his group of girls dancing on the sands.

Such are some of the simple amusements of Blankenbergh during the day. For the ordinary walker of small capacity there are but two walks, one to the little harbour and pier (still unfinished) about half a mile south, and the other on the sands. Those whose powers are good can stretch away beside the railroad to Heyst, five miles farther north, a miniature Blankenbergh, with its paved dyke, hotels, and fishing village behind ; or proceed still farther to Ecluse, the port—if it may so be called—of Bruges, the entrance to the large canal which connects that town with the sea. Half-way between Bruges and Ecluse too is the curious old place called Damm, where Margaret, a princess of the house of York, landed and was met by the Duke of Burgundy, whose wife she became. It was then a flourishing place, and its quaint old Hôtel de Ville and large church, now partly ruined, are there to attest its former importance. For a good walker Bruges itself is not too far ; but people generally find it pleasanter to take the railroad and keep their walking for the town, unless they are so well acquainted with it as not to care to visit its many points of attraction. A single line of rail connects Heyst and Blankenbergh with Bruges. It is better therefore for the English visitor, if the train suits, to

make his halt after coming from England at Bruges instead of Ostend, and devote the next day if he chooses to seeing the fine Memlings in the hospital of St. John, the famed chimney-piece in the town-hall, and the exquisite chapel of the Saint Sang (Holy Blood), in addition to the town itself, full of quaint and picturesque corners.

The Hôtel de Flandre is a quiet thoroughly comfortable hotel of the old-fashioned kind : good cooking and moderate prices. Here the Comte de Chambord took up his abode a year or two ago, driving daily over the paved uninteresting road to Blankenbergh to take his afternoon dip in the sea.

The evening amusements at Blankenbergh are necessarily limited ; but people who have lived in the open air all day, are very ready to go to bed early, and by eleven the silence of sleep is over the whole little place. At the Kursaal, which is the largest, and after all best, hotel, there is dancing in its fine large *salon* every evening from eight till ten, and twice a week a children's ball, when the dancing-master, M. P., who gives lessons every afternoon in the same *salon*, is the master of ceremonies, and introduces the little ladies and little gentlemen to each other. It is a pretty and lively sight seen from the gallery which runs round this fine room, and to which only those living in the hotel have access. It was rather amusing to take one's chair there now and then, and look down on the moving world below.

One half of this hall is devoted in the early part of the day to the *table-d'hôte*. No sooner, however, is the seven-o'clock supper over than with incredible rapidity the screens and tables are removed,

the floor swept, and whole place thrown open to the public, who are admitted by tickets upon a moderate subscription; a good band at one end plays excellent music, and at ten the ball is over, and every one departs. The company at these dances is not of course of the very highest rank—the upper class of tradespeople, the rich *bourgeois* manufacturing classes. Sometimes a couple will descend from the gallery of spectators and take a turn in the waltz; but in general those of the upper classes do not join: there are pretty and well-dressed girls enough without them, some in their bonnets and some without, enjoying themselves quietly, without flirtations or forwardness. The Kursaal is the largest hotel, the Victoria the dearest and more select. At the Kursaal people were boarded at nine, eight, and seven francs a day, according to the floor upon which the rooms were selected. The cooking was excellent, and those who did not like dining at one could do so *à part* at five o'clock. The last time we spent a week at the Kursaal we were obliged to give up the one-o'clock *table-d'hôte*; we were unlucky in our neighbours. The company at the Kursaal in August, it must be confessed, was not the most select in the world, that is, the Belgian portion. The Belgian *noblesse*, when they go to Blankenbergh, take lodgings or houses, which, when facing the sea, are dear enough—from five guineas a week to twenty. They would not care to sit at table next to their milliner or bookseller; but that does not so much signify to the foreigner, unless the individuals are objectionable. Our neighbours, for instance, were a family party of jolly well-to-do looking people, evidently wealthy tradespeople from Brussels, who

loved good cheer and could pay for it. They had their bottles of iced champagne every day, and brought their own beer, English bitter ale, with them. They talked and laughed amongst each other, and all got up very red in the face. We did not object to all this, nor to the extraordinary appetite of one of the party, if it hadn't deprived us so often of our dinner. We could stand it no longer. We were so placed that they occupied one end of the long table, and were always helped before us. Sometimes, it is true, the waiters began on one side of the table, and sometimes the other. No matter; the individual in question must have calculated these changes to a nicety. He always contrived it so that his own party were all served, and then he ruthlessly swept off the whole remaining portions into his plate; and, alas, at these *table-d'hôte* dinners things are so exactly apportioned to the guests that the waiters, after a show of fetching more for us, always returned with an empty dish, like a dishonoured cheque. No assets.

'Je n'ai pas diné' (I haven't dined), said this dreadful person one day. 'Qu'est-ce que j'ai mangé, oui; qu'est-ce que j'ai mangé, rien?'

Upon which he transferred to his plate the whole slice of Gruyère put on the table with the dessert, and declared himself famished. After that we dined at five in a private room, leaving 'Qu'est-ce que j'ai mangé,' as we called him, to himself.

Everybody in Blankenbergh lets lodgings or takes boarders: the doctor of the place receives a goodly number, and even the convent opens its gates to women and children at seven francs a day. Few stay beyond the three weeks prescribed as a cure; the

air and bathing are said to lose their good effects if indulged in longer, and late in the autumn the flat lands behind the sand-hills are considered to have aguish and feverish tendencies in their fogs or exhalations, so that by the end of September or middle of October in fine years every hotel and lodging-house is closed, and the population reduced to the poor fishermen and natives of the place, many of whom pass the bitter winter-days in bed, having no money to procure fuel, and little or no occupation to tempt them out of their homes.

Blankenberge and Heyst are north of Ostend. About twelve miles south, by the old post-road to Dunkirk and Calais, is the new place Nieuport les Bains.

PART II.

NIEUPORT LES BAINS.

THE name sounds well, with its two first-class hotels—Hôtel des Bains and Hôtel du Digue; and its second and third-rate hotels, with its own railroad station. Its pier, said the advertisements; its unparalleled sands; its superb view over the country, with twelve *clochers* (we can't say steeples, so shall translate it church-towers—and O, how suggestive of flatness! we thought); its picturesque sand-hills; its promenades—on the water, on donkeys, in carriages; its wonderful air, and its springs of excellent water. What a list of attractions! The last-named one is perhaps one of the most important to those who know how bad the water is at Ostend, Blankenberge, and almost every place on that coast. The water at Nieuport is tasteless and very drinkable, as is also the *vin ordinaire* at two francs a bottle; but let English visitors beware of the

beer. On re-reading the flourishing advertisement that has tempted some to Nieuport les Bains, we are bound to confess the heads are strictly true; for certainly there are the sands, the sandhills, the hotels, the pier, the donkeys; and indeed the donkeys deserve a word; they are strong active creatures, not worn out with too much work at present, and very lively, we thought, as we observed a troop of them cantering along the paved road of Nieuport town to Les Bains, with their owners, good stout Flemish girls, on their backs.

'How is it,' asked one of our party, 'these donkeys go at such a pace now, and I can't get anything but a walk out of them? They know their owners, I suppose?'

'Shall I tell you the secret?' said another. 'Look at that woman riding there, her feet are bare, but on her left foot is a strong leather strap, and on that strap a sharp spur: no wonder these poor creatures go when they feel that.'

The donkeys were a fact; perhaps the carriages were there also. But the boats we failed to discover; a leaky affair there was on the canal that connects Nieuport town with the sea, to enable people to cross it. But the ferryman seemed never there; and the danger was, if once on the other side, not being able to return unless by walking all the way back to Nieuport town, which is a good mile from the baths, and not an unpleasant walk either by the side of the canal or by the paved road. The town itself has one or two points of interest in its large church and old town-hall (now used as a storehouse), of quaint and curious architecture. It was originally surrounded by walls and ditches; has very little al-

tered in size or shape. A square, or *place*, containing the inns and principal shops, forms the centre-point from which the few streets run at right angles. It is not a cheerful-looking place, but contains in its little shops all that a casual visitor would be likely to require; it is connected with Bruges and Furnes and other towns by canals. The country between Nieuport and Dixmude, a much more important place, is rich and well cultivated. The verdant plains are dotted all over with cattle, the rich pastures furnishing some of the best butter in Belgium. From the summit of some of the sandhills—which are indeed, as the advertisement promised, much more picturesque than usual—extensive and not unpleasing views are to be obtained. So clear is the air that every object stands out in strong relief. Numberless villages are scattered on the plain; the bright-red roofs of their houses giving colour to the scene, and contrasting with the dark clumps of trees and sombre gray of the churches, and telling out strongly even in the far blue distance. Then the broad effects of light and shadow on those large plains are full of attraction to any one with an artist's feeling; and though fifty people might describe Nieuport les Bains as the dullest dreariest bathing-place they ever visited, ten might find in it, as we did, beauties in the surrounding landscape, and delights in the perfect freedom of a place so isolated and quiet.

But let me describe more minutely this place, that in a few years, when more extended, may become as popular as others on that coast.

It is only twelve miles south of Ostend; but the railroad makes so great a curve that the shortest

pleasantest way of reaching it is to take a carriage at Ostend, sending what luggage cannot be put on it round by rail. A carriage to hold four, with two horses, will cost twenty francs; the fares by rail for four people rather more.

Nieuport les Bains consists of two large hotels, occupying two sides of a square, of which the railroad and station form another, and half a dozen houses, including a villa of some pretensions, styled Villa Crombey, the residence of a Tournais gentleman of that name, who is the proprietor of the hotels and almost all the other houses; in short, the whole place is a speculation of his, and, from what we saw, the occupation and amusement of his life to look after. His house, we were told, is kept open all the winter; he invites his friends there for *la chasse*, namely, rabbit-shooting and wild fowl. He is the king of the place; and it was amusing to see the *pompiers* from Tournai, when they came one Sunday to a banquet at Nieuport, march past the villa saluting his flag, which was then lowered, and the Belgian colours hoisted, the *pompiers* halting once more underneath Madame C.'s windows to play her a serenade. Monsieur C. entertained the officers at dinner at his villa; the privates, about two hundred, dining together in the *salon* of the hotel, most probably at M. Crombey's expense. The two large hotels face the sea, and are both under the control of one manager. The rooms in both are good, especially in the Hôtel des Bains, only finished this year. There is a superb table-d'hôte room, a large salon, a ladies' room, and various private sitting-rooms on the ground-floor; the bedrooms are all very fairly furnished,

and are five francs facing the sea, and three francs each on the first-floor; four and two francs on the second. The food and cooking, as the French say, leave '*everything to be desired.*' And between the hours of one and seven, the two table-d'hôte meals, it is almost impossible to get anything but a cup of coffee. In a place where there is so little to do, so little to see, dinner becomes an event; and when, day after day, one is presented with the same tough ill-cooked meat it is trying. After a few days we began to feel quite starved, and appreciated the anxiety and interest people seemed to take in letting down and hauling up nets from off the pier. A franc an hour, we learnt, was paid to a man for the hire of one of these umbrella-shaped nets, and his services in winding it up. Some sort of bait was strewn upon it; and when drawn up, those who were lucky found small fish of various kinds, sometimes a sole or two, and plenty of small crabs or crayfish. The advertisement did not mention this amusement, which after all, with the exception of donkey-riding, seemed to be the only one at Nieuport. Still those who seek a place, as we did, for the sake of the air and bathing only, desiring quiet and freedom, may do worse than go to Nieuport. The visitors who still remained towards the close of the season were of a very superior stamp to those at Ostend and Blankenberghe, quiet family people, whom one met at dinner and saw little of at any other time. The paved walk in front of the hotel is of very restricted dimensions at present; but one can stroll up and down without hat or bonnet till ten or eleven at night almost alone. The sandhills, of fine clean dry sand, are sources of amusement to the young. They are try-

ing to climb up, but delightful to descend; digging the heels well in, one slips down with a rush, much as one can imagine one would down the snowy side of a mountain. There is sketching for the real true observer of nature. But the cooking—O, the cooking! Here was a place where we could do just as we pleased; live in an Ulster or ball-dress without exciting attention; where there was perfect quiet, water good, bathing excellent. But we were driven away; and accordingly got up one morning at six, and found ourselves breakfasting at Dixmude by nine, after having walked through this bright bustling-looking town, and seen the beautiful rood-screen in the church. So far on our way for the rest of our time to

ROSENDAEL.

Twenty years ago the casual visitors to Dunkirk, if such there were, would be asked with pride by its inhabitants if Monsieur or Madame had been to Rosendael. And if seduced by the pretty name, 'Valley of Roses,' he ventured thither, he would, after suffering agonies on the sharp stones of the Dunkirk streets, innocent then of footways, find himself passing through the Rosendael gate, and emerging upon a sandy dusty high-road. Well-grown trees for a coast-place, palings, and flowering shrubs betokened the existence of country dwellings; but about half a mile from the gate the object of attraction to the Dunkerquois was reached, namely, a tolerably large and pretty tea-garden. Here they came to dance and amuse themselves on fêtes-days. Probably the visitor, unless very enterprising, would have been satisfied with this, and returned the way he came; had he proceeded, he would have

found houses, small it is true, detached, yet in rows, bordering this road for a very great distance ; if, tired of a straight road, he diverged and turned aside towards the sea, he would be astonished at the number of small houses he would find scattered about, nestling between the sand-hills or built beside the deep sand roads that run parallel with the high-road. These snug-looking little dwellings hold the fishing population of Dunkirk. By that I do not mean the coast fishermen, but those brave fellows who go off to Iceland and the North Seas, are absent often six months, and then bring back vast stores of cod salted, which, after being properly cleaned, dried, and packed in barrels, are ready for home or foreign use. It is an interesting sight to see one of these boats return from the far North ; a group of women—mothers, wives, sweethearts—ready on the pier to welcome them, and all anxiety lest some one should be missing from among the crew.

This the visitor to Dunkirk and Rosendael who remains through September may do, for in that month they begin to drop in. And here, in these houses of two stories with bright-green shutters and bright-red roofs, lived these hardy fellows then, as now ; their clean-looking but loud-tongued Flemish wives occupying themselves, some with washing, some with selling the produce of their little gardens in the market and elsewhere, some entering into daily service as cooks and *bonnes* during their husbands' absence.

Dunkirk has grown in business of late years. There are factories occupying many hands, and more shipping and trade. Rosendael has grown too. All about the dunes, as the hillocks and plains of sand are called, and wherever

a little vegetation has bound the sand more firmly together, there small houses spring up. It is an immense place if judged by the area of ground it covers, but not so densely populated as one might suppose, seldom more than one family occupying each house. It will be a larger place yet ; for, as during the last three or four years occupants of another kind have been found for some of these pretty little houses, it will go on adding to its number of these small abodes in the direction of the sea, until the casino and bathing establishment, once isolated, will be united to the village by rows of houses, semi-detached or wholly so.

The history of the place is this : Up to the time of the war the 'Etablissement des Bains' had been situated near the pier, and was a solitary building. Dunkirk being a fortified town, no houses of any size could be erected outside its walls. There were consequently few visitors from distant parts to Dunkirk, as lodgings in the town were scarce and hotels of the better kind not numerous, and well filled in general by commercial people.

It was a long agonising walk over the stones to the sands, or an equally agonising drive in a jolting omnibus ; on the other hand, the bathing done, there were the advantages of a clean, bright, healthy town, and the interest connected with a port, where vessels of all countries were constantly arriving or departing.

During the war this établissement was converted into a manufactory of cartridges. One day an explosion took place, and thirty souls, chiefly women and children, passed away thus awfully. When peace was re-established it was thought desirable to remove the bathing arrangements to a greater

distance, where building could be allowed ; and in the commune of Rosendael the fine reach of sands was soon covered with upwards of two hundred bathing-machines, temporary wood houses for restaurants and the bathing-people. A frightful casino was erected, where occasional concerts and balls are held, but which, owing to the want of courage of the proprietor, has never been furnished ; it is therefore no great addition to the place ; but a cluster of villas and lodging-houses now group themselves round this building, and foundations at a great cost have been made for a large hotel, which is not gone on with because concessions, which the shareholders consider they ought to have from the municipality of Dunkirk, have not yet been granted to them. When this hotel is completed and some sort of a promenade made, if possible, on the loose sand which now one has to wade through before getting to anything like a firm footing, 'Rosendael lez Dunkerque' will be one of the most popular places on that bracing coast.

The village, as I have said, ten or fifteen minutes from the sea, is fast being joined to the group of buildings, and the few houses that have been furnished and let to visitors having answered very well, others of a better stamp and with more pretensions are being built. Between Dunkirk and Rosendael there is now a pretty public garden ; the walk from the village has something, therefore, of the character of a country walk. Altogether, there is more variety than is to be found at most seaside places ; something of country with the advantages of a good town, bathing, sands, shipping, and one or two excursions by rail, making it easy to vary a month's residence for those who do not want

fine furniture, fine company, or the bands and other small excitements of a watering-place, but really go for good air and bathing, and prefer a quiet out-of-the-way place where they can get rooms to themselves or a small house, and in that case they will easily find a *bonne* to cook for them, and be really more comfortable and certainly more cheaply lodged than in the hotels and *pension*s of other places.

The danger to Rosendael, when it increases in size, will be the absolute absence of drainage. In Dunkirk, it is true, the gutters are the sewers ; but then the Flemish French of that town are a cleanly race, given to much washing of houses and streets, as well as of themselves. Pails of water are daily thrown down, and two little streams on either side the road carry off everything into the Port ; which to revenge itself on the town, which is as free from smells as any place, does, when at low water, favour the Dunkerquois with a bouquet of its own more powerful than pleasant. But at Rosendael the roads are sand, and whatever is thrown on them either sinks or remains, and, as the habit of the people seems to be to cross the road and throw everything objectionable on it, the result can be imagined. Where a good many houses are together, the odour around betrays the state of things, and it must be the purity and freshness of the air that prevent fever and sickness ensuing. In the great cholera years the town of Dunkirk and its immediate environs were exempt from the plague, and one hears little there of low fever. The ground in every direction is highly cultivated, and individual cleanliness compensates for their primitive sanitary arrangements.

HONEYMOON REFLECTIONS.

A very old Story.

I.

'Tis over ! It is done at last !
The fetters Cupid forges
Were riveted quite hard and fast,
Last Monday, at St. George's.
A shoddyocrat with ample means,
A priest intoning neatly,
A bishop and two rural deans,
Have tied the knot completely.

II.

And so you're on your honeymoon,
And wear a golden fetter ;
You speculate—'tis rather soon—
‘Is it for worse or better ?’
You're thinking of a year ago—
‘Twas just such sunny weather—
But somehow time went not so slow
When we two were together.

III.

A year ago, those pretty eyes
A world of truth reflected ;
A year ago, your deepest sighs
I never half suspected ;
A year ago, my tale I told,
And you were glad to listen ;
You were as pure, as good as gold,
Or any maid fresh kissen.

* * * *

IV.

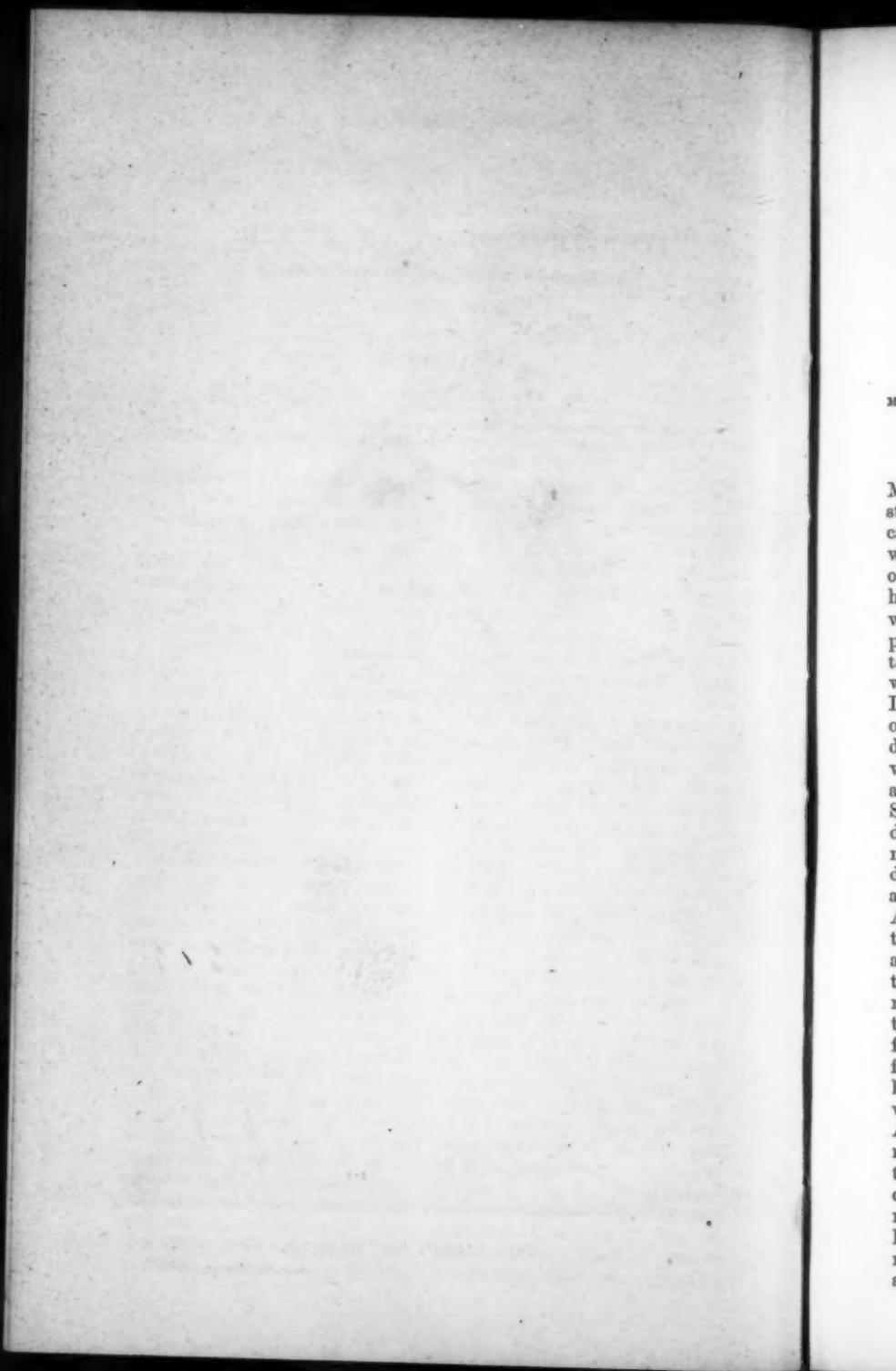
In life's brief play you chose your part,
Poor little foolish vendor !
You sold your trustful loving heart
For shoddy and for splendour.
The sky so blue, the sea so glad
Brings joyous recollections ;
And yet you seem a world too sad
For honeymoon reflections.

J. ASHBY-STERRY.



HONEYMOON REFLECTIONS.

See the Verses.



THE TRUE STORY OF 'PUNCH.'

An Historical, Biographical, and Critical Gossip.

BY JOSEPH HATTON.

CHAPTER X.

MR. JOHN TENNIEL—MR. SAMBOURNE'S INTRODUCTION TO 'PUNCH'—TENNIEL AND JERROLD SELF-EDUCATED IN ART AND LITERATURE—HORACE MAYHEW AND THE KNIGHT IN 'THROUGH THE LOOKING-GLASS'—SHIRLEY BROOKS, HIS EARLY WORK AND HIS POLITICS—THE COULISSES, A STORY OF 'BEHIND THE SCENES'—BROOKS'S NOVELS AND PLAYS.

MR. JOHN TENNIEL, it is understood, regrets that he ever drew a cartoon for *Punch*. Fancy *Punch* without Tenniel, and Tenniel without *Punch*! Where would one have been without the other? If, when Mr. Doyle threw up his pencil, Mr. Tenniel had not undertaken to finish the *Almanack*, who would have stepped into Mr. Doyle's place? There was only one man for the position. *Punch* discovered him. That one man was not even a properly trained artist. There were no National Schools of Art in John Tenniel's day, and he had received no technical tuition. As a boy he could draw; while a boy he exhibited a picture at the Gallery of British Artists in Suffolk-street; and at the age of five-and-twenty he was a successful competitor in one of the cartoon competitions at Westminster, and painted a fresco in the Palace. He has painted a few pictures since, commissions from private collectors; and he has also exhibited. Standing within the walls of the Royal Academy in the present day, he may well be forgiven his regret that he did not devote himself to canvas instead of wood. He might not have been more famous than he is now; he would have been richer; he might not have been so happy. He would have missed

the friendship of the *Punch* table, but he would have made up perhaps even for that; he would have been spared the sorrow which comes to him with the vacant chairs; for he was the personal and intimate friend of the best men who sit no more under the mahogany tree of Whitefriars.

The genius that is developed by hard work (and that is the only kind of genius I know) is always modest. It has raised so high a standard for itself that on the way upwards it only feels that it is far away from the goal. Mr. Tenniel has none of the personal affectation of art, and never had. He shaves, and his hair does not make a grease spot of his coat-collar. He is not seen at the West-end in a velvet coat and a crimson neck-tie. He does not pose either at home or in society. See him riding his quiet cob in the Park, or taking his Sunday constitutional at the Zoo, you would only notice him as an intelligent-looking gentleman—a country solicitor perhaps, or an engineer with a new railway bridge in his mind. There are two artists who appear to be peculiarly fond of the Zoo—Tenniel and Doré. The moment the French limner comes to London he rushes off to the Zoo. Mr. Tenniel has used pretty well all the most notable animals in

his cartoons and elsewhere. Sambourne, the youngest member of *Punch's* staff, has found material for many of his fashion sketches in the same quarter. Sambourne may be regarded as the coming man on *Punch*. He has established his initial letter as a specialty. His association with *Punch* was almost accidental. Articled to an engineer or architect, he discovered an aptitude for caricature. He sent some sketches to Mark Lemon, who requested him to call.

'Yes, they are not bad, but you don't know how to draw; take some lessons, and come to me in three months.' Sambourne went and came. 'Better decidedly; go over the way to Mr. Swain and he will teach you how to draw on wood; call again.'

In this way Mr. Sambourne was encouraged to work, and in due course the result was publication. If he does not desert the wood for canvas, Mr. Sambourne will make an enviable position; but in the present day it is difficult to keep artists from the more profitable paths of art which lead through the exhibitions to fame and fortune. The *Graphic* and *Illustrated London News* find this an increasing difficulty. Most of the men who drew for *Once a Week* in the palmy days of that publication have given up book illustrating, and are selling pictures for more than their weight in gold. No wonder that, standing within the walls of the Academy, John Tenniel wishes he had used his brush instead of his pencil. From a financial point of view, he would have done better if he had never drawn cartoons for *Punch* or pictures for books. The world would have been the worse for such a change in his career. That fact should console him for the victories he would have won had

he entered what is regarded as the higher arena in which Millais, Faed, Nicol, Leighton, and Fildes contest for golden honours.

Mr. Tenniel's biography might be written on a page of note-paper. He was the son of Mr. John Baptist Tenniel, was born in London in 1820, and educated at a private school. He was precocious with a pencil. He is a perpetual example of the triumph of industry. The cleverest writer on *Punch* was self-educated. Douglas Jerrold was his own schoolmaster. The greatest artist that ever drew for *Punch*, or possibly ever will draw, is John Tenniel. He is a self-taught draughtsman. The Exhibition year, as I have already stated, saw him on *Punch*. His book illustrations have given a new charm to fairy lore; his pencil has given an added grace to poetry. He has adorned *Lalla Rookh*; he has given new point to *Aesop*; he has planted new laughs in the *Ingoldsby Legends*; but he could not save *Once a Week* from becoming a Whitefriars failure. I have heard critics say that Mr. Tenniel lacks humour. Will they permit me, with all humility, to refer them to *Through the Looking-glass*? The knight who is always tumbling off his horse is a caricature of the late Horace Mayhew. I have seen Tenniel's note of 'apology' to Mayhew, sent with a copy of the book in which poor Mayhew will live for many a long year to come. Is there no humour in the conscious imbecility that breaks through the armour-clad dignity of that exquisite figure? And farther on where the situation is touchingly illustrated: 'Whenever the horse stopped (which it did very often) he fell off in front; and whenever it went on again (which it generally did rather suddenly) he fell off behind. Otherwise he kept on pretty well, except that he had a habit, now

and then, of falling off sideways.' Fitting the benign face (with its white hair and long moustache) of Horace Mayhew to the ponderous armour and the numerous inventions of the knight was in itself a stroke of rare good-humour, the more so that all the *Punch* men liked 'Ponny,' and every reader of *Through the Looking-glass* loves the dear old knight. I know how sorry I was when I learnt that the cheery face of Horace Mayhew would be seen no longer on first nights at the play; and, from a reader's point of view, I felt almost as sad over the parting with Alice's knight.

"You've only a few yards to go," he said, "down the hill and over that little brook, and then you'll be a queen. But you'll stay and see me off first!"

Poor dear old knight! has not every reader of his adventures read on with a smiling knowledge of the pretty little joke he was unconsciously 'leading up to'?

"I sha'n't be long. You'll wait and wave your handkerchief when I get to that turn in the road? I think it'll encourage me, you see."

"Of course I'll wait," said Alice; "and thank you very much for coming so far—and for the song—I liked it very much."

"I hope so," the knight said doubtfully; "but you didn't cry so much as I thought you would."

"So they shook hands, and then the knight rode slowly away into the forest.

"It won't take long to see him off, I expect," Alice said to herself, watching him. "There he goes! Right on his head as usual! However, he gets on again pretty easily: that comes of having so many things hung round the horse." So she went on talking to herself, as she watched the horse walking leisurely along the road,

and the knight tumbling off, first on one side and then on the other. After the fourth or fifth tumble he reached the turn, and then she waved her handkerchief to him, and waited till he was out of sight.'

I have previously dwelt upon the characteristic modesty of Mr. Tenniel. The public had a notable confession of it on Saturday, June 10, 1876, when the famous cartoonist dined at the Mansion House, when the Lord Mayor entertained the representatives of art. Mr. Tenniel, being called upon to respond to the toast of 'Periodical Art,' made his first public speech. He said:

'I am called upon in the most sudden and unexpected manner to return thanks for the toast which you have just so kindly received of "Periodical Art." I am naturally of the most modest and retiring disposition in the world (laughter); and when I tell you I have never made a speech in my life, you will readily understand my feelings at this present moment. Periodical art is term, I think, of perhaps rather wide interpretation; and as it might take some little time to tell you what I think upon the subject, I think, perhaps, I had better only thank you in a very simple and commonplace kind of way for the honour, my Lord Mayor, you have done to periodical art in proposing the toast, and next for the honour you have conferred upon me in associating my name with the toast' (cheers).

A stray copy of *Gavarni in London*; a copy of the *Illustrated Review*, containing a biography, the dates in which I happen to know were supplied by the subject himself; the revival of the *Creole* at St. James's Theatre,—these and a bundle of old letters coming under my notice, all in one week, serve to impress me very forcibly with the fact that I have done but scant justice to Shirley Brooks. Though I have glanced at his career, and noted its various landmarks, it will not be out of place if, with the help of the authorised and well-written biography just mentioned, I trace in closer detail the life of one of

the most accomplished and graceful of modern *littérateurs*. Charles Shirley Brooks was born in 1815, and on leaving school was sent to a solicitor's office, with a view of following the profession of the law. He worked hard and well, passing with marked success the preliminary examinations before the councils of the Incorporated Law Society in Chancery-lane. As in the case of Dickens, the law did not prove attractive to Shirley Brooks. In the few leisure hours which the profession gave him he found both time and inclination to write for the press, though at first he received little encouragement from matter-of-fact editors, who show no particular sympathy for outsiders. Nevertheless, young Brooks fancied he saw his way. He threw aside his law-books, and after a short probation obtained an appointment as a parliamentary reporter, and at the same time continued to send contributions to the magazines. In due time his industry was rewarded by the publication here and there of the first-fruits of his literary pen. For five sessions Shirley Brooks sat in the reporters' gallery of the House of Commons as the writer of the parliamentary summary of the *Morning Chronicle*. This experience afterwards served him well on *Punch*, the attractions of which periodical were immensely enhanced by the 'Essence of Parliament,' a weekly summary as piquant as it was scholar-like. The proprietors of *Punch* thought it hardly Radical enough in its political tone, but Shirley Brooks was not the man to turn out his politics to order, and there was a gulf between his views and the opinions of the extreme party in politics. I turn to one of his pleasant letters written to me during my proprietorship of *Berrow's Worcester Journal*, in which

he mentions a partnership in politics peculiarly complimentary to one of the twain :

' Got the *Berrow*. Do you know, I did not know that you were a Conservative? Mark Lemon said you were a Radical. I am a Whig; so was Satan.'

It was during his first journalistic engagement that Shirley Brooks was selected by the *Morning Chronicle* to go abroad as a special commissioner, authorised to inquire into the great problematic questions of Labour and the Poor in various foreign countries. In this capacity he visited the principal cities and provinces of Russia, Syria, and Egypt. The letters which he wrote home to his paper were afterwards republished by Messrs. Longman as the fifty-third part of the 'Travellers' Library.' The volume was called the *Russians of the South*. It was full of shrewd and entertaining matter, narratives of excursions, and thoughtful discussions in regard to the social condition of the Muscovite tribes grouped together between the Austrian borders of Moldavia and the western frontiers of Astrakhan. In 1849 Albert Smith, who had been selected to edit *Gavarni in London* (a series of sketches by a French artist who sketched London scenes, not so well as Doré, but quite as Frenchy), enrolled Shirley Brooks among his contributors, and the result was three very characteristic sketches. Shirley Brooks, even in those days, evidently thought himself a cynic, and in his latest days he tried to play the part of one; but he was not a cynic, either by nature or art. What he mistook for cynicism was a genial quick-witted satire, which crops out in the *Gavarni* sketches with a delicious freshness. Note, for example, his first few lines on 'The Opera,' written to accompany

a sketch of well-filled boxes and dress-circle :

"*Ce sont des plaisirs vifs et charmants qu'il faut goûter, et non décrire.*" Thus, if we remember aright, pleads the excellent Philaret Charles, as an excuse for not doing with his pen what his compatriot, M. Gavarni, has so happily done with his pencil. As, with all deference to the sensibilities of M. Charles, one usually finds it a far easier task to describe pleasures than to feel them, we hesitate to offer his ingenious plan for avoiding ground which is so well known as to be dangerous. It would, perhaps, be better, and certainly it would be truer, to allege that one follows thin artist with about as much chance of putting the subject in a new light as is left to the young gentleman "with" Talfourd or Thesiger, when either advocate has sat down after his speech. Still, if one chose to be dreary, and were not troubled with a literary conscience, it would be easy to divulge several very instructive things about the Italian Opera; and we know quite well how we would treat the subject if we were writing for the worthy millions, and not for *la crème*. Do you think we should not remark upon the influence which music has exercised in all ages, and give a cursory biography of all the instrument-makers, from Tubal Cain to Erard? Should we not be classically enthusiastic concerning the choral strains of Greece, and reverentially inquisitive about the Hebraic anthems? And if a reader escaped without an introduction to Sappho, and an allusion to Orpheus, and a new version of the story of Arian, he would get off better than we think he ought. What is the use of all the general information which writers read up, if it is not to be reprinted upon opportunity? Dogberry was a wise man, and ought to have been made editor of a magazine in Messina for that one piece of counsel to George Seacole, to let his reading and writing appear "when there was no occasion for such vanity."

"The Coulisses" was Shirley Brooks's next paper, written up to a picture of "Behind the Scenes at the Opera." It contains the best piece of theatrical disenchantment I have ever come across. I was discussing with an eminent dramatist the other day the peculiar fascination which the back of a theatre has for so many people. My friend marvelled that men of taste and means—men enabled to command any luxury of life—could find a charm in regions dominated by cursing carpenters,

arrogant stage-managers, and dirty messengers. But he overlooked the fact that he knew every rope, and that for him the theatre had many annoyances. The casual visitor only sees with wonder the tricks of the trade, and moreover often feels that there is a sort of undisguised wickedness about the business which is a relief to one who lives behind the thick tinsel of society and cant. Not that there is anything devilish behind the scenes. On the contrary, for a stranger, behind the scenes is eminently prosaic and business-like; and so Mr. Honeyball, the friend of Shirley Brooks, found it:

"Now, then, as Mrs. Paul's gone, try that burgundy, and I'll tell you all about it. I went to the stage-door and sent in your note. Presently a man came and told me to "come this way." I followed him through a dark place, with many turns, and I kept knocking my hat against something soft (not my head—ha! ha!) put that into your next play, my boy); and then I came upon the lady of the establishment. She had a sword and a shield, so we could not exactly shake hands; but she spoke in a ringing merry voice, and asked how you were. Before I could answer she rushed on the stage and defied a fellow all over hair to fight her. I wanted to see the fight, so I went forward, when a man in his shirt-sleeves told me I was in sight of the audience, "O!" I said, and went somewhere else. Then another man told me I mustn't stand there, "O!" I said, and changed my place; when I felt something hot going down my neck, and, looking back, a demon was shaking a fiery torch, full of rosin, at the lady. I ran back, when a scene was suddenly shoved up, and I was fixed against a white wall. I bawled, and the prompter looked round and swore at me for making a noise.

"It's a sad thing, but prompters will swear.

"I wriggled out, when a scene-shifter came, begged my pardon, and said he should be glad to drink my health.

"He was glad to do it; so am I. Well?

"Well, I was all over white, so I went into the green-room (d'ye see?—put that in your next play). Everybody looked at me, and then took no further notice. So I asked a young lady with pink legs if she was fond of acting. She said she never acted; then she went away. A man came in with a brown George and gray stockings. I recognised him, and told him he had often made me laugh. He looked very grim, and said I did him

proud, and went away. Then a sort of lady's maid came with a basin and towels and a rouge-pot and a woman's dress in her hand; and all the men were turned out of the room—something about a "quick change" I didn't understand. So, not knowing what to do next, I went up some steps and looked out at the window of a castle. In a minute I heard a roar of laughter, and found I was in front of the audience; but before I could retreat an old man in a king's dress pushed me away, told me I was mad, put his head out at the same hole, and said he wasn't at home. I came down, but could not get away; for about twenty dirty soldiers, with halberds, informed me I must wait till they "went on." So I stood stewing there for half an hour, while they grinned at me. Presently they all levelled their weapons, shouted very loud, and ran upon the stage, every one trying to push me over. I had had enough of it, so I got out—thanks to a little girl, who piloted me—and you don't catch me there again, I can tell you. It's all very dull, except what's very disagreeable.'

Two years after the publication of *Gavarni in London*, Shirley Brooks, in companionship with Angus Reach, produced *A Story with a Vengeance*. It was a volume of only ninety pages, containing nine amusing papers and embellished with as many wood-cuts, besides a title-page, vignette, and a comic frontispiece by Leech. In 1857 he gave several examples of his powers as a lyrist in a gift-book entitled *Amusing Poetry*, for which he acted as editor and compiler. Meanwhile he wrote anonymously for journals and magazines. 'In Memoriam,' a slight tribute which I paid to his memory in *London Society*, contains an account of his first connection with *Punch*. During his association with *Punch* he wrote the political articles in the *Illustrated London News*; a weekly summary for an Indian journal; leaders and London letters for two provincial newspapers; and contributed not only to current but to dramatic literature. He edited the *Literary Gazette*, the *Athenaeum's* clever rival. He contributed to *Echoes of the Clubs*; and he edited, 'with some notes,'

an entertaining volume entitled *Follies of the Year* (1844-1864), by John Leech, being a collection of the frontispieces of *Punch's Pocket Book*. In 1853 he produced his first three-volume novel, *Aspen Court*. It was inscribed to Charles Dickens. The work was well received; and though it may be said to have established his reputation as an imaginative writer, five years elapsed before he made his second venture as a novelist. His new work was announced in serial form: Part I. appeared in 1858. It was intended that the *Gordian Knot* should be completed in twelve numbers, but it was not finished until December 1859, when Parts X., XI., and XII. were published together. The book was exquisitely illustrated by John Tenniel. The heroine, bow and arrow in hand, made a charming frontispiece. The author's pen was arrested several times by ill health. The story was principally planned at Mark Lemon's cottage in Sussex, and was inscribed to his host and hostess. The year 1861 saw the publication of the *Silver Cord*, in three volumes, a story 'of man's wickedness and woman's weakness; of false love that brought ruin, and of true love that lives through the storm.' Five years later the novelist wrote another story, published in parts, and illustrated by Dumaurier, the most prolific at the present time of *Punch's* draughtsmen. This was Shirley Brooks's last novel, and his best.

At the present day a comedy, written on the principle of *Sooner or Later*, from a pen possessing the sparkle and originality of Shirley Brooks, would be certain of success. The story lacks construction, but it is full of bright dialogue and striking sketches of character. This may be said of

most of the author's works, and yet he never attempted to write a comedy. His first dramatic work of any importance was the *Creole*. It was produced at the Lyceum in 1847, and it has recently been revived at the St. James's. Since it was originally produced, the *raison d'être* of the story may be said to have gone. Slavery being abolished in the once great slave-owning countries of the world, the wrongs and cruelties of that domestic institution fail to excite the sympathy which was common to all classes when Shirley Brooks demonstrated the peculiar horror of the thing in the *Creole*, which also had the advantage of such actors as Emery, Keeley, Mrs. Keeley, Frank Matthews, and Leigh Murray. *Anything for a Change* was produced at the same house in 1848. It was a comedietta, in which the action of the piece was imitatively carried out by Messrs. Harley and Charles Mathews. In

the year 1850 the *Daughter of the Stars*, a two-act drama, was produced at the Strand, with Mrs. Sterling, Mr. Compton, and Mr. Farren in the leading parts. A year afterwards he wrote for the same house an extravaganza *apropos* of the Exhibition; and in 1860 he collaborated with Mr. John Oxenford in another piece of burlesque called *Timour the Tartar, or the Ironmaster of Samarkand*. Mr. Brooks also wrote several capital farces, in which the fun is of a quiet satirical character—the sort of fun that excites a chuckle rather than a laugh. There was one thing which Shirley Brooks ought to have written—a comedy. It is gratifying to know that Mr. Disraeli has paid a tribute to his memory in the direction which Shirley Brooks would most desire and appreciate. Few clever or useful men die rich. Mr. Brooks made some provision for his wife and children; this has been augmented by a grant of 100/- a year to his widow.

(To be continued.)



FRIENDS AND FOES.

So it has come to this, my brother,—

And you and I are side by side,
Each of us slashing at one another ;

And yet your sister had been my bride !
Her heart and yours and mine are broken,
And we must kill each other, as token
That both are slaves, and weird is wroken !

Swish ! And that's for the kiss you gave me

Two years back when we swore our troth !
Slash ! Your blade did shrewdly shave me ;

But I think your heart was something loth !
What does it matter ?—the blows come thicker !
Strike, my brother ; death will be quicker,
If we slay each other—our strokes are sicker !

When I am dead and you are dying,

Take up my head upon your bosom ;
So that the folk may find us lying
Amongst the trampled clover-blossom—
We who loved so well each other
That neither could spare his own sworn brother,
But slew him—to stay this earthly pother !

O my brother and O my love !

It was this self-same honour kill'd us ;
And when we are dead and we meet above,
How will it irk us what man spill'd us ?
A cut for France, and a blow full fine !
Holà !—ah, love !—ah, brother mine !
Mercy, Master of love divine !

B. MONTGOMERIE RANKING.



FRIENDS AND FOES: AN INCIDENT OF THE FRANCO-GERMAN WAR.
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HE WOULD BE A SOLDIER!

BY R. MOUNTNEY JEPHSON, AUTHOR OF 'TOM BULLKEY OF LISSINGTON,'
'THE GIRL HE LEFT BEHIND HIM,' ETC.

CHAPTER XIX.

On so intimate a footing did Wilder establish himself with the Boomershine family that before very long he was made the confidant of the wrong under which it still smarted—the withdrawal of the light of aunt Millicent's countenance.

'It all originated, my dear Mr. Wilder,' said Mr. Boomershine one day, 'in the unfortunate prejudice she entertains against your noble profession.'

'My dear sir,' returned Wilder, 'to remove that unfortunate prejudice shall be my aim in life.'

Though holding a very exalted opinion of Mr. Wilder's transcendent abilities, Mr. Boomershine shook his head and smiled incredulously.

'Not only,' continued Wilder, 'shall this prejudice be removed, but I shall give you a tangible proof of the same. I and several of my brother officers shall lunch with Miss Simple, by her own express invitation, before we are two weeks older.'

The incredulous smile vanished from Mr. Boomershine's benevolent countenance. Not that he had ceased to be incredulous, but he felt his estimable young friend was raving, and he was pained.

For the following week Wilder concentrated all his energies on one point. He not only elicited a great deal of information from the Boomershines concerning aunt Millicent's habits and cus-

toms, but he also reconnoitred in his own person that eccentric lady's premises. Moreover, he was much engaged during this period in certain mysterious preparations in conjunction with sundry young subalterns, who were ever ready to place themselves implicitly under his leadership in any project of his devising.

On a certain forenoon Miss Millicent Simple, accompanied by her maid and a few pets, sat, according to custom, in an arbour in the grounds surrounding the house whither she had fled from the contaminating atmosphere of Snoozleton, when that place had been converted into a military quarter. On the table in the centre of the summer-house was placed Mentor, in his cage, and the work on hand was evidently the regeneration of that fallen bird. Alas! he was but half reclaimed. In the middle of the first bar of the 'Old Hundredth' he would suddenly branch off into 'Pop goes the weasel,' and an opprobrious epithet was frequently introduced with startling effect into the middle of a moral precept. Whenever he showed symptoms of backsliding in this grievous manner aunt Millicent would sharply enjoin the maid to stuff her fingers into her ears; while she herself, with noble steadfastness, stood the broadside of abuse with which Mentor raked her fore and aft. At times the depraved creature nearly blew aunt Millicent's head off with the

strength of his remarks, and it was only with the aid of her smelling salts and a strong sense of duty that she was able to remain at her post.

It was while Miss Millicent was thus engaged that the maid, whose sense of seeing was perhaps sharpened by the temporary and artificial deprivation of the faculty of hearing, exclaimed :

'Lawks, miss, if here ain't some men coming up the walk. I do believe they're orficers from the barracks at Snoozleton.'

'Officers! Barracks! Coming up my walk!' gasped Miss Simple in three spasms.

'Yes, miss, that they are. Well, I never! Did *you* ever, miss?'

Thus appealed to, Miss Simple mentally sought an historical parallel, and finding it in the episode of the Sabine women and the Roman soldiery, shuddered from head to foot.

'Wha-wha-what are they doing?' she asked in tones tremulous with fear and indignation. 'They're inebriated of course, and rolling about; and—and I shouldn't wonder if there's going to be a prize-fight, and they've had the audacity to choose this sequestered spot for their brutal purpose—the wretches!'

'No, miss,' replied the maid, who kept a sharp and not altogether hostile look-out on the advancing enemy; 'they seem quite peaceful. They keep stopping and examining the trees and plants, and writing down something in their note-books, and one of them seems to be lecturing them like.'

'Dear me, what can they be doing?' said Miss Simple, curiosity for the moment getting the better of fear, and, for the first time since the maid's announcement had spread alarm and horror in her breast, she allowed her eyes to

rest on the audacious invaders of her privacy. 'Gracious! their movements are certainly most mysterious. They are so wrapt in their occupation, whatever it may be, that I believe we should have time to escape to the house without being seen.'

'I think, miss,' said the maid, who, during Miss Simple's observation of the foe, had been busily arranging her cap and smoothing her hair, 'it would be safer to stay where we are. If they was to see us they'd be sure to run after us and kiss us. It's a way they've got in the army, miss.'

'The libertines! the wretches!'

'But if they was to try it, miss, I'd defend you to the last gasp. I'd say, "Kiss me, 'ug me, do anythink you like, but spare my missis."

'Noble girl,' murmured aunt Millicent. 'I shall never forget this devotion. I shall follow your advice and stay here.'

In silence the approach was now watched. It was slow owing to constant inexplicable stoppages of the party, and some minutes elapsed before the intruders were within earshot of the summer-house. At this awful juncture aunt Millicent summoned up all her fortitude to hear the ribald jest or the licentious oath which she had not the slightest doubt was so soon to shatter her notions of propriety to their very foundations. In place, however, of either the one or the other, there fell on her wondering ears, in tones so innocent and bland that the speaker seemed to bleat, the following remark:

'And here, my dear brother-officers, we have a perfect specimen of the *Juniperus Chinensis*, or the Chinese juniper, a cupiferous shrub, and a native of China, introduced into this country in the year 1804.'

On this there was a general and searching examination of the cupuliferous shrub, and sundry notes were taken down by the members of the party.

Aunt Millicent watched and listened spellbound, while the good-looking maid evinced some symptoms of disappointment as the opportunity for displaying the noble self-devotions she had pledged herself to seemed to wane.

'What a beautiful study is botany,' continued the one who was evidently the leader of the party; 'and to us in a special degree have been vouchsafed opportunities of observing this engrossing science in its loftiest aspects, for who is there amongst us who has not frequently experienced the sensation of being up a tree?'

'Ah, what an elevating thing it is to be up a tree!' observed one of the party.

'It is, indeed,' murmured several in mild tones.

Aunt Millicent here betrayed symptoms of interest. Repugnance and indignation were gradually fading away from her face, and giving place to attention, not wholly unmixed with admiration.

'And here, again,' went on the bleating voice in tones of gentle ecstasy, 'is a specimen, a be-a-utiful specimen, of the *Fraxinus Excelsior*, or pendulous-branched ash, an *oleaceous* tree, a native of Timbuctoo.'

'The erudition he displays is marvellous,' murmured aunt Milliecent, whose nose was now protruding through the trellis-work of the arbour in a frenzy of curiosity.

'I am sorry,' continued this erudit personage, 'that our esteemed young friend Boomershine was unable to accompany us on this little botanical expedition. I should have enjoyed initiating him into those calm joys to be obtained from a contemplation of

the *Fraxinus Excelsior*, or pendulous—Aha,' said the speaker, with a sudden transition from the vegetable to the animal kingdom, as one of aunt Millicent's pets, a fine cat, emerged from the arbour and presented itself in his path, 'here we have the *Felis Domesticus*, the domestic cat: order, *Thomasus Tiliensis*.'

Aunt Millicent was conquered. The tenderest chords had been touched. She laid down her arms.

'I have been unjust,' she murmured. 'I have condemned the innocent unheard. As I said before, the erudition he displays is simply wonderful. *Thomasus Tiliensis*. Dear me! I myself, who have studied the subject for years, did not know the particular order of the feline tribe to which this attached creature belongs. *Thomasus Tiliensis*! Beautiful!'

The strangers were now crowding round the domestic animal with tender and soft cries of 'Pussy, pussy, poor pussy then.'

What a change had come o'er the spirit of aunt Millicent's dream! The tears of self-reproach filled her eyes, and again she murmured, 'I have been unjust. I have wronged the innocent. Dear me, what beautiful sentiments!'

This last remark applied to an oration that was being delivered over the cat.

'What an instance is here afforded us, my dear brother-officers, of the gentle influence exercised by kindness over the most savage natures. Here is an animal by kindness and affection transformed from a tiger into the solace of our firesides. Instead of a roar, striking terror to our hearts, a plaintive "miaou" appeals tenderly to us.'

'Exquisite!' fell from aunt Millicent in broken accents.

'Its very predatory instincts, which were once directed against

man, are now enlisted in his service, for the guardianship of his hearth and his home and his larder, against the inroads of "rats and mice and such small deer," as our immortal bard says. What evidences of loving care we read in this tasteful blue riband tied round the faithful creature's neck! What—O, goodness, gracious me!

"What is it? What has happened to warrant the use of such strong language?" asked one, with considerable reprehension in his tones. "Yes, what can have betrayed you into such unwonted warmth of speech?" sternly demanded another; while the remainder shook their heads and turned up their eyes to show how pained and shocked they were.

"And these are the men whose every word I had thought had been an oath," muttered aunt Millicent, with a bitter pang of remorse.

"I beg your pardon for what is I know unpardonable, but I will explain what led me into these unseemly ejaculations. It is not likely that an animal so well cared for, so lovingly tended as this one evidently is, would stray far from the loving hand which tends to its wants and from the home which shelters it from the inclemency of the weather and the persecutions of boys and of dogs. It was the contemplation of this which suddenly awoke me to the fact that in the excitement of finding a beautiful specimen of the *Viburnum Cassinooides*, the cassine-like viburnum, a cupuliferous shrub, and the ardour of the subsequent search after more varieties, we have unwittingly been guilty of trespassing. These are evidently private grounds."

Blank dismay fell on the party.

"It is not man-traps; it is not

steel-guns; it is not prosecution with the utmost rigour of the law that we fear—it is the condemnation of our own consciences."

A general murmur endorsed this noble sentiment, and the party moved as if on the point of beating a precipitate retreat.

At this juncture Miss Millicent Simple would have rushed forward with an invitation to stay on her lips, so completely had the belief of a lifetime been upset by the previous ten minutes. But her heart was too full to speak, and maidenly reserve riveted her to the spot where she sat.

"And yet stay," said the last speaker, as he suddenly arrested the departure of the group. "This tenderly cared for animal as it purrs and rubs itself against our legs gives us a lesson of confidence in human nature. The individual who owns these grounds evidently owns this attached creature, and the individual who owns this attached creature evidently possesses a kind heart, and would, I feel assured, not begrudge us while we partake of our frugal repast the grateful shade afforded by these beautiful trees of the cupuliferous and aque-foliaceous orders. Here, my dear companions," said the speaker, producing a bag full of biscuits, "are two Abernethies apiece. We have learned in our boyhood that hunger is the best condiment, but the experiences of manhood prove that there is a still better—an approving conscience. Let us, then, recollect as we eat that this frugality, this rigid economy, is practised in order that out of our scant and inadequate means we may be able to subscribe more fully to the funds of that benevolent society for providing the inhabitants of equatorial Africa with double-breasted Ulsters and warming-pans."

Miss Millicent Simple could

stand no more. The icy barrier of maidenly reserve, already considerably thawed, melted away altogether before the glowing picture of peace presented by an inhabitant of equatorial Africa with a double-breasted Ulster and a warming-pan.

'Go,' she said to the pretty maid; 'go,' she exclaimed, with streaming eyes and in agitated tones. 'Go to the house and tell them to prepare the best luncheon that the larder affords; and tell Binns to get out some Madeira—the Madeira, mind. Quick; do not lose a moment.'

As the maid rushed to obey this behest, Miss Millicent Simple emerged from the arbour, and presented herself to the strangers.

The tableau is here left where tableaux often are when the writer feels he cannot do them justice—to the imagination of the reader.

In a quarter of an hour Hookey Wilder's boast to Mr. Boomershine, that he and a party of brother-officers would lunch with Miss Millicent Simple, was being fulfilled.

CHAPTER XX.

'Now, Boomershine, it is as a Snoozleshire man that I have got you to accompany my Adjutant and myself on this—this *reconnaissance*, I may call it. I feel it is my duty to make myself thoroughly acquainted with the strategical features of the locality, and your knowledge of the country may be of service.'

Thus spake Colonel Rooteen as, accompanied by Lieutenant Dressop, his adjutant, and Verisopht Boomershine, he walked along a country road in a remote corner of Snoozleshire, towards which they had all three just journeyed by train.

'By the way, though,' said Colonel Rooteen, 'you say you do not know very much of this neighbourhood?'

'No, sir,' replied Verisopht. 'I have an aunt who has lately come somewhere about here, but—but—'

'Ah,' interrupted Colonel Rooteen, 'I detect a certain amount of hesitation. You had better embody your reply in the form of an official letter, and send it on through the proper channel, and—dear me, dear me, I mean I have heard all about it—antipathy to soldiers, retreated before the enemy on our arrival at Snoozleton, and all that sort of thing. The cultivation of friendly intercourse with the inhabitants is laid down in a military maxim of considerable antiquity, and I hope that by a careful observance of the rule this unfortunate prejudice may be speedily removed. Now, Boomershine, when right's in front what's the pivot?' suddenly asked Colonel Rooteen, putting his favourite rudimentary question by way of freshening up Verisopht's military genius before commencing the topographical examination of that young officer.

'I beg your pardon, sir, that's obsolete,' said the Adjutant.

'Never mind, Boomershine,' said Colonel Rooteen; 'I'll ask you something harder. And I do wish, Mr. Dressop, you would endeavour to keep pace with the times. I admit that the frequent alterations and changes in our system of drill are extremely puzzling; but you must march along, sir, with the requirements of the age. You must not halt; you must not mark time. If you do, you'll—you'll—by gad, sir, you'll be left behind.'

Here Colonel Rooteen's demeanour suddenly altered, and his countenance became like an April sky alternately bright and clouded,

and through all these changes of expression he kept on muttering to himself, 'Left behind—dear me, it's *somewhere*.' At last, to continue the meteorological metaphor, the sun shone brightly forth and the clouds disappeared below the horizon.

'Mr. Dressop, sir,' said Colonel Rooteen in a burst of chuckles, 'if right's in front you'll be left behind. Ha, ha, ha!'

This was a joke, and a very fair specimen of Colonel Rooteen's jokes, which always had such a fine old 'shoppy' flavour about them that it required about thirty years' service in the army with a sun-stroke or two before a person could thoroughly understand and appreciate them. As our readers will not be composed mainly of field-marshals we abstain from drawing to any great extent on Colonel Rooteen's fund of humour.

'Now,' he remarked, suddenly arresting his steps opposite the well-kept grounds of a comfortable-looking house; 'what a capitally-built residence that would be for defensive purposes, supposing of course that your enemy was not able to bring up his artillery. Those wings and projections would admit of such a capital flanking fire. Now, Boomershine, what would you do if you had to hold that house with say a company of men and the enemy within a day's march of you? Well, well, perhaps that is a little too advanced for you just yet, and so we'll enlighten you. The first thing would be to cut down all the surrounding trees and shrubs which might afford cover to the enemy.'

'Using the boughs and smaller branches for *abattis*,' said the Adjutant.

'Blow up the stables and all the outhouses,' said the Colonel, gradually working himself up into an apoplectic condition.

'Demolish that summer-house,' said the Adjutant ruthlessly.

'Take out all the windows, and fill them up with sand-bags,' said the Colonel in quite a martial glow.

'Leaving space enough between them to serve as loopholes,' added the Adjutant excitedly.

'Or if sand-bags aren't available, use the mattresses and bedding,' spluttered the Colonel, with his eyes starting out of his head. The game of war was getting terribly exciting.

'Or the doors taken off their hinges, and the tables and sofas,' said the Adjutant, with the keenest interest.

'Or, by gad, if that wouldn't do,' said the Colonel, his utterance almost choked by the torrent of expedients with which his inflamed military brain was overflowing, 'I'd shoot the men-servants and the maid-servants and the cattle and every confounded stranger within the gates, and use their bodies as sand-bags. Nothing should beat me, by gad! And, and—well I don't think there would be anything more to do then, Mr. Dressop, except to keep a sharp look-out and your powder dry, eh?' said the Colonel, after a pause, and as he wiped from his brow the perspiration engendered by the heat with which he had thrown himself into the exciting topic.

'Nothing more, sir; I don't think we omitted anything of importance.'

'I think, Mr. Dressop, we conducted the defence of that post with a tolerable amount of ability.'

'Yes, sir; most certainly so. That sand-bag expedient, in particular, was undoubtedly brilliant, sir.'

'Well, well, I will not say that as a *dernier ressort* it has not some merits. In that comfortable-

looking establishment the butler, I'll be bound, is a sort of fellow who could be converted into a most efficient sand-bag. "Imperial Cæsar, dead and turned to clay, may stop a hole to keep the shot away"—with all apologies to Shakespeare, for whose military genius I have the greatest respect. He was a thorough soldier at heart, sir, if not by profession. But enough of this digression. Let us reverse the "general idea." And, dear me, what a delightful afternoon we are having! Let us suppose ourselves the attacking force, say, with a wing of the regiment. Now, Boomershine, pay great attention. I shall give you as practical a lesson as possible. The first thing I should do, of course, would be to reconnoitre. Now, the great principle in reconnoitring is to see as much while being seen as little as possible. I therefore,' said Colonel Rooteen, as he crept stealthily behind a tender sapling of about an inch and a half in diameter, 'take advantage of cover, that is, conceal myself. Thus effectually concealed,' continued Colonel Rooteen, as he peered cautiously beyond the tender sapling with the air of a Sioux Indian on the war-trail, 'I proceed to—to—dear me! What the Dickens is the meaning of that?

Colonel Rooteen then looked at the Adjutant, who looked at Verisopht, who gazed in utter bewilderment at a group which suddenly came into view round a turning of one of the walks in the private grounds. The group numbered about five or six persons, and the two most conspicuous figures were an elderly lady and a young man. The elderly lady leaned upon the young man's arm, and seemed to hang on every word that fell from his lips, while the young man, with a subdued

and deeply-contemplative cast of countenance, seemed to be expatiating in terms of great eloquence, to judge from the admiration and delight on the lady's face, on the surrounding beauties of Nature. One of the young gentlemen comprising the group carried in his arms a sleek cat, which ever and anon he stroked with a tenderness bespeaking a deep affection for the species; while another bore with equal solicitude and care a lap-dog somewhat inclined to *embonpoint*. Altogether, the party presented a picture of peaceful and innocent harmony seldom seen in this world of strife and envy.

As Verisopht Boomershine gazed he gasped out, 'Aunt Millicent!'

'Hokey Wilder!' ejaculated the Adjutant.

'I hardly believe my senses,' murmured Colonel Rooteen. 'It is some day-dream, some phantom of the brain. I once had a sun-stroke in India and a sabre-wound on the head, and between the two,' faltered the poor gentleman, 'I may be wandering in my mind. Or this wild fancy may be the result of a disordered system. I have certainly,' continued Colonel Rooteen, in feeble tones, 'experienced of late a dizziness of sight and a tightness across the head; I shall make my Adjutant take a four-grained blue-pill to-night, and the Sergeant-Major a saline draught in the morning. For if one has a disagreeable duty before one, what the deuce is the good of having subordinates if you can't make them perform it for you? I don't know though,' he added, as the mind gradually reasserted itself; 'I fear in this case there would be a missing link in the chain of responsibility. No, no, this is no fancy. There is some mischief brewing—certain to be wherever that young scamp is—

and it is my duty at once to expose him.'

At this point aunt Millicent espied Verisopht, while simultaneously Wilder and his fellow-conspirators caught sight of their commanding-officer. For the first time in his life Hookey Wilder looked, as well as felt, disconcerted. But this was only a momentary weakness. Suddenly remembering on the part of himself and friends a pressing engagement which would not admit of one instant's delay, he and they took their departure, in spite of Miss Millicent Simple's earnest entreaties to stay while in their presence she made the *amende honorable* to her nephew and Colonel Rooteen. As Wilder and his companions precipitately retreated in one direction, Colonel Rooteen, accompanied by Verisopht, advanced in the other.

For a few moments Miss Simple paused to gaze on the retreating form of Hookey Wilder, and then pressed forward to meet her young relative.

'Verisopht, my dear boy,' she exclaimed, as she fell on his neck, 'I have been unjust. I have maligned your noble profession; but now my eyes have been opened. Is that Colonel Rooteen? Introduce me. I shall esteem his acquaintance a great honour.'

'Madam,' said Colonel Rooteen, lifting his hat and ramming it on his head again very fiercely, 'I am glad to hear that your sentiments concerning the profession I belong to have undergone a change; but the society I saw you in, under circumstances so strange and unaccountable that for a few moments I believed myself to be dreaming, renders it probable, madam, that your present good opinion of us is formed on as false a foundation as your former bad

one was. Madam, I apprehend that you have been the victim of a hoax.'

'O, impossible,' gushed Miss Millicent Simple; 'he could not be guilty of such a thing. Such beautiful language, such a true appreciation of the beauties of Nature, such an ardent admirer of domestic animals—no, he could not deceive!'

'It strikes me forcibly, madam, that he not only can, but that he has just done so.'

'Then he is not what he said he was?' asked Miss Millicent in broken accents.

'Did he say, madam, that he was the biggest young scamp in the regiment; that he was a thorn in the side of good order and military discipline so to speak; that he had been expelled from the Staff College; that he is, in short, a young rascal from whose knavish tricks neither sex nor age nor rank is safe?'

'No, no.'

'Then, madam, to use affirmatively the words you put interrogatively, "Then he is not what he said he was."

'And you, you,' said Miss Millicent, betraying symptoms of approaching hysterics, 'are not what he said *you* were? You do not belong to the society for providing the inhabitants of equatorial Africa with double-breasted Ulster coats and—'

'O, pooh!' ejaculated Colonel Rooteen, blowing out his cheeks, and purpling under the asperion on his character. 'Just like the young rascal's impudence. I belong, madam, to a society for providing the inhabitants of Africa with a bullet in their interior whenever we come across 'em. *That's* the society I belong to, madam.'

The impending fit of hysterics here broke forth, and aunt Milli-

cent's shrieks speedily brought an excited crowd of female servants to the rescue. In the van of the domestics was an inflamed-looking cook, armed with a spit; and amongst the rest such weapons of feminine warfare as flat-irons, curling tongs, &c., were freely brandished.

'Egad !' said Colonel Rooteen as Miss Millicent's shrieks of 'Go away ; O, go away, you wretches !' incited the approaching throng to greater rapidity and fury. 'Egad ! appearances are deucedly against one. There's no knowing of what I may be accused. Mr. Dressop, sir, you'll be good enough to create a diversion from a retrograde movement on the part of the main body by tumbling into that horse-pond. Possibly they may stop to pick you out ; probably they will not ; but at all events they are certain to pause to enjoy the spectacle. If you're drowned I'll take all responsibility off your shoulders.'

By 'main body' Colonel Rooteen, of course, alluded to his own, as was only right, seeing that it weighed rather more than the other two put together ; and having thus taken precautions for covering its retreat, he proceeded to execute a retrograde movement of considerable celerity.

From a fir plantation not one hundred yards away, Hooky Wilder watched the evolution with aching sides and streaming eyes.

CONCLUSION.

THOUGH not, as may be gathered from the conclusion of the last chapter, by any means insensible to the exquisite enjoyment afforded by the spectacle of his commanding-officer fleeing from the wrath of an excited throng of females, Wilder was still con-

siderably chagrined at the unexpected *dénouement* resulting from Colonel Rooteen's military observation of the surrounding country. Aunt Millicent's conversion through his (Wilder's) means would have been a triumph which would have placed him at the zenith of popularity with the Boomershines, with whom, for obvious reasons, he was particularly anxious to stand well ; but now he felt that, instead of filling up the breach between the estranged relatives, he had widened and deepened it to an extent which in all probability could never be bridged over, and that the whole affair had turned out a miserable *fiasco*, of which the least said the better. This last view of the case was not the one taken by Colonel Rooteen. It was many days before Wilder heard the last of it. 'Reasons in writing,' 'wiggings' in the orderly room, threats of courts-martial, were a few of the terrors Colonel Rooteen held over the delinquent. But through this dangerous sea, teeming with shoals and rocks, Wilder steered his bark with consummate skill into calmer waters.

In the mean time our hero Verisoph Boomershine had ceased to occupy that lowly position known as 'boots ;' that is to say, he was no longer the junior officer of the regiment. Another sub-lieutenant had joined, and Verisoph proudly felt that he now had his foot firmly planted on the first step of the ladder leading up to the field-marshall's *bâton*. Altogether, he was getting well into the swing of a military career, when a letter from aunt Millicent threw him into a state of indecision and doubt. It ran thus :

'Dear Verisoph,—Tormentor, as, alas, I must still call him, not only steadily refuses to turn over a new leaf, but has also corrupted

a once virtuous bird whose society I had hoped would have reformed him. The readiness with which both have picked up what was wicked, compared with their very gradual acquirement of what was good, is to me an unmistakable proof of the natural proneness to evil of their species. I am thus thoroughly convinced that my reformatory home for soldiers' and sailors' parrots would be a failure, and have consequently abandoned that scheme. I have now quite lost faith in these animals, and I find that I must give something else a place in my affections. I need not tell you that, after the visit of that viper and his noisome brood, the army, of which they are indeed fitting members, is to me, if possible, more hateful than ever. If you will give it up, and thus throw off the yoke which Satan has placed on your neck, and fill up the void in my heart caused by Tormentor's backsliding, I shall make you a handsome allowance during my lifetime, and constitute you my sole heir at my decease. I shall give you a week to decide, and in the mean time I remain your anxious and expectant aunt,

'MILICENT SIMPLE.'

With strange infatuation Verisophit appealed to Wilder for counsel, and that individual, after reading the letter and muttering something about 'hatters' and 'March hares,' advised him to 'close with the old girl's offer and chuck the service.' 'Anyhow,' he added, 'you must consult your people, and I'll drive you over this very afternoon.'

They drove over, and the letter threw the family into a bewildering state of perplexity. Mr. Boomershine was loth to deprive the country of a future Wellington; but at the same time he was not blind to the superior advantages of a bird in the hand over

one in the bush, and he wavered. So hard was it to know what to do, that at last it was decided to take advantage of the entire week offered by aunt Millicent before settling the knotty point.

The week had nearly passed, and Verisophit was still tossing on a sea of doubt, when Wilder came to him one morning with a letter in his hand.

'I say, Boomershine, here's a rum coincidence! They want me to leave the service too. Had a letter from the governor this morning. Here's what the old boy says:

'Dear Reginald,—I have heard of your last escapade. I am sick and tired of this nonsense, and foresee that, sooner or later, if left to your own devices, you will disgrace your family by being publicly dismissed from the service.'

'That's what I call precious cool, considering that the old boy was kicked out of the army himself, when he was a youngster, for painting his colonel's charger sky-blue,' interpolated Wilder. 'It must be congenital, and it's very ungenerous casting what one can't help into one's teeth. He might as well abuse me for inheriting his Roman nose. I rather like *this* part of his letter though.'

'Now I'm convinced that there is nothing like matrimony for steadyng a young man, if the choice be a wise one; and if you could come across some modest unsophisticated young girl—none of your garrison hacks, mind you, that you young fellows sometimes get hooked by, but an innocent well-brought-up young lady that you could love, I should be only too glad to see you married and settled down, and I would receive her with open arms. She need not have much money. Let her be all I have described, and

that will do. I am lonely in this country-house by myself, and you could live here just as you would do after my death. Your uncle, to whom I've spoken on the subject, told me that, if you married as I wished, he would again alter his will to its original form, in your favour, as it stood before you were expelled from the Staff College. Think well of all this. Never mind about the money, I repeat. Your mother brought me no other dowry than modesty, virtue, and a loving heart; and never was man richer than I in the possession of these. That is a dream of the past now, my dear boy, and all I have to look forward to is to see you enjoying a happiness similar to that which was once mine.

'Your affectionate father,
R. C. WILDER.'

Verisopht noticed that Wilder, notwithstanding all his recklessness and fun, looked quite serious as he folded up the letter and muttered softly, 'Poor old governor, I'm afraid I haven't been exactly a crown of joy to him.'

Hooky Wilder, however, was not much given to the melting mood, and by the time the letter was once more in its envelope he was himself again.

'I say, Boomershine, do you know any unsophisticated modest little girl answering to the governor's description, eh?'

'Well, let's see. There are—' And Verisopht began running over the names of numerous Snoozleshire young ladies.

'No; none of those are up to the mark. Suppose you begin where charity does—at home?'

Verisopht looked hopelessly idiotic. Somehow the possibility of a sister marrying seldom enters the calculations of a brother until the fact is fired off point-blank under his very nose.

'How would you like me for a brother-in-law, old cock?'

'Dear me, do you mean to say—'

'Yes, of course I do. And what's more, it will be all plain-sailing now. The only difficulty before was that interview with the governor in the study. But now, armed with that letter, I'll beard the lion in his den this very day.'

Verisopht, as soon as he had got over his surprise, seized Wilder's hand, and went through a pump-handle performance until he was quite out of breath.

'I wish I could make up my mind what to do about my aunt's letter as easily as you have about your father's,' said Verisopht, when the hand-shaking was over.

'Well, my dear Boomershine,' said Wilder, 'as, at the present rate of promotion, you will be just about one hundred and twenty-five by the time you become a general, I'd advise you to give up the field-marshal's bâton *in futuro* for the "handsome allowance" *in esse*.'

Wilder's counsel, as was always the case, had great weight with Verisopht, and finally, after much heart-burning, he decided on accepting his aunt's offer.

So here was an end of all those dreams of martial glory in which Verisopht Boomershine had indulged in his quiet country home. And so end the dreams of many a young traveller as he starts on his journey along the road to fame; and for just as miserable a little trifle as the whim of a half-witted old lady, many a dreamer might think with a sigh, when years have passed over his head, and he looks back on the contemptibly small sunken rock on which his bark, dancing gaily along before favourable gales, suddenly went to pieces.

'MY OWN CHILD.'

BY FLORENCE MARRYAT, AUTHOR OF 'LOVE'S CONFLICT,' ETC.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

'CASTLE RIVERS.'

On the day following the receipt of May's letter, announcing their return, I found myself at Castle Rivers.

Owing to my own state of health and the short time that elapsed between my child's engagement and marriage, I had not had an opportunity before of visiting this estate, the principal one amongst her husband's property. Now that I did see it, I was astonished at its size and imposing appearance. It was a far finer place than Gentian's Cross or Derry Lodge, although, from the limited income of its owner, it was not perhaps surrounded by so many signs of luxury as the Powers were enabled to bring about them. I could not help feeling rather proud, however, to think that the fine old house before me belonged to May, and pleased myself with imagining all the improvements she would be able to effect when she came into her fortune. I found Lord Riversdale and his daughter, Lady Selina Anerley, already installed at Castle Rivers in anticipation of spending Christmas with the bride and bridegroom, as well as Lord Eustace's two brothers, who were known only by the names of Jack and Sidney. I seemed a very small and insignificant personage in my own eyes among such grand people, but they were all very kind to me, especially the old

Earl, who appeared to be perfectly satisfied with his son's choice.

At last the long-wished for moment arrived and I held May in my arms again. We had received a telegram from Dublin to say they had reached there safely, and were coming on to Wicklow by a certain train. Of course the carriage went to the station to meet them. Lady Selina inquired courteously if I would not like to occupy a seat in it, in order to welcome my daughter the sooner, but I shrank from the idea. I was too nervous, too anxious; I could not have met her before a crowd! But I slunk away from the drawing-room about the time that I knew the carriage must return, and ensconced myself in the library which opened on the hall. There I sat in the dusk of the wintry afternoon, straining my ears to catch the first sound of wheels coming up the drive. Once or twice I was disappointed. Carts and other vehicles seemed to be coming and going, making the frosty ground ring beneath the horses' feet, just for the pleasure of tantalising me. But at last there was no doubt of it. At last I could hear the carriage with its easy muffled sound roll smoothly over the park road and stop at the hall-door.

I heard the footmen in attendance throw open the portals, and let down the carriage steps. I heard a light step come hurriedly into the hall,—I heard my darling's voice,—I could wait no longer. I rushed out of my con-

cealment with a cry of delight, and caught her in my arms. I could only feel that she was a bundle of furs and velvet, but I knew that it was *she*, and that was sufficient for the satisfaction of my yearning heart. As for May, she gave one start as I came upon her, uttered one word, '*Mother!*' and then fell upon my neck in a burst of hysterical weeping. She cried so bitterly and her agitation was so great that I was compelled to lead her into the library I had vacated, and seat her on a chair.

'May! May! my beloved! my precious one!' I kept on repeating, as I knelt beside her. 'There is nothing to cry for, dearest. Our separation is over. It is all joy and happiness in the future. You have come to your own home, and here is your mother to welcome you. Be comforted, my May; be calm. I cannot be happy till I see you so.'

We were still in this position when Lord Eustace came in, evidently looking for his wife.

'Is Lady Eustace here?' he inquired as he looked round the gloomy apartment. Then, recognising our figures by the light thrown on them from the hall, he exclaimed, 'O Mrs. Power! how are you? Delighted to see you again, I'm sure.'

He shook hands with me hurriedly and turned to his wife.

'Frances, my father and sister are in the drawing-room waiting to see you.'

She rose at once, drying her eyes.

'Come, dear mother,' she said in a subdued voice which still betrayed she had been weeping.

I followed them in silence to the presence of Lord Riversdale. The name by which Eustace addressed his wife had jarred, as it ever did, upon my ears. He who

knew so well the history of my dealings with the Power family, why had he adopted this means of recalling them to me?

Lord Riversdale and his sons and daughter received my child with all possible cordiality, but I thought she responded rather wearily to their congratulations.

As she came into the full light my eyes sought her dear face greedily. It looked older and less bright, but perhaps that was only my foolish fancy. It was certainly very pale, but she had travelled a considerable distance that day, and must necessarily have been much fatigued. She made an early excuse for seeking her own room to prepare for dinner, and naturally I accompanied her there. But when her maid had divested her of her many wrappings and exchanged her heavy travelling costume for a dressing-gown, I was shocked to see how thin she had become.

'My own darling!' I exclaimed in horror, 'what *has* happened to make you fall away like this? Why, May, you are a perfect skeleton! You must have been more ill than you have ever let me know.'

'It's nothing, dear mother,' she said soothingly. 'I have never regained flesh since I had that attack of fever in Italy. They wanted me to see a doctor in Paris, but I refused. I feel quite well, and I've grown nearly an inch since we parted. I shall be ready to be shown about in a caravan soon.'

'I thought you looked taller, my darling, but your loss of flesh would make you appear so. Who was it wanted you to see a doctor in Paris?'

'O, Madame de Brillac and her crew.'

'Were they kind? Did you like them, May?'

'No!' she answered shortly.
'But you enjoyed being in Paris?'

'I liked it as well as any other place. I could never enjoy any place or anything without *you*, mothie. The world seems very big and strange and empty to me when you are not there.'

'My own! And so you are glad to come back to the old country and the old mother again, my bird, eh?'

'O! *so* glad, *so* glad!' she answered.

She had begun to cry again, and I did not wish the maid to witness her tears.

'You are overtired, my precious child,' I said; 'you must go to bed early to-night, my May, and you will be yourself again by the morning.'

'I won't go to bed; I shall be all right when I have had my dinner,' she replied, with a spark of her old wilfulness that delighted me. 'Give me that black velvet, Jenner, it will do just as well as anything else.'

I was very much excited and fluttered whilst I was dressing myself to appear at the same dinner, and my mind was not quite at ease.

I had plenty of opportunity during its continuance of observing my child, unseen. She certainly looked older. Her features were sharpened; there was a slight depression in either of those cheeks erstwhile so round and blooming; and the wild unchastened mirthfulness of her eyes had been replaced by a serious look, sadder but much more beautiful. Indeed, the entire change, though it woke a suspicion in my anxious heart that was very like pain, was an improvement rather than otherwise. It gave my darling's face the look it had ever wanted—something to solemnise

and sanctify the earthliness of its beauty. It was the signal flag that we have accepted the common lot; it was the sign that we have been compelled, whether with our will or against it, to call in the aid of Heaven to help us to combat against earth; it was—God help my child!—the look of Pain.

As I recognised it, my own heart sank, but seemed to be bound closer to hers than it had ever been. It was a bitter truth to accept, but it added a new tie to the old one; it made us sisters.

I could do nothing but gaze at my darling all that evening, and wonder how and why this new expression had come into her lovely face. But from the moment that I saw it she stood in a higher light to me. She was no longer *only* a joy and delight, a pride and a blessing; she was a creature that I reverenced, a shrine at which I worshipped.

When I waked the next morning I could not at first imagine why I had such a heavy feeling at my heart. In a moment I had remembered. It was the new expression in the face of my child. Yet she came down to breakfast clad in a pale-blue cashmere robe trimmed with swansdown, and looking so exquisitely lovely and refined that, though some might have voted her delicate, few would have said she was ill.

Lord Eustace and I had been the first to meet in the breakfast-room that morning, and had some conversation respecting her.

'How is May?' I had inquired anxiously as he appeared.

'Quite well, thank you. I have not had an opportunity yet, Mrs. Power, of thanking you for taking the trouble to come here and meet us. The Castle is but a dreary place in winter.'

'O, how can you imagine I should have been content to stay away! You kept my darling from me such an unconscionable time. But I had hoped to see her looking stronger than she is, Lord Eustace.'

'She is perfectly strong, I assure you.'

'But she has grown very thin and pale.'

'She is thinner, I daresay. She is growing fast, you must remember, and the climate of Italy may have affected her a little. But she is anything but pale, usually.'

'I am so glad to hear it. I was always foolishly anxious about her, as you know. She has been all I possess for so many years now!'

'Yes, ah! exactly!' he said indifferently as he turned away. 'Well, Selina,' he continued, addressing his sister, who just then entered the room, 'now you've come, I suppose we may begin breakfast!'

'Won't you wait for your wife, Eustace?'

'Not a bit of it. She's the most unpunctual creature in creation. Where will you sit, Mrs. Power? What may I give you? I went on, as he uncovered the various dishes with which the table was spread.

We had got halfway through the meal before my darling appeared. I watched her entrance keenly. She went the round of the table, shaking hands with all present, and when she came to my chair she bent over it and kissed me as warmly as if she had been a little child again. But she never even glanced at her husband. She even took the chair he pushed towards her without looking at him, though she bent her head in acknowledgment of his courtesy, as she would have done to any stranger.

I thought of the undisciplined, rapturous, hoydenish manner in which I had been used to rush into my boyish husband's arms at whatever time of the day I met him—and sighed. But then I had been a very rude unformed girl at the time of my marriage, and without the slightest knowledge of the usages of society. And May was nearly two years older than I had been, and had been married much longer—perhaps that caused the difference. Still I should have liked to see a look—if it had only been one look—of mutual love and understanding pass between them. But he continued steadily to attack boiled chicken and ham, and curry and rice, and everything else he fancied on the table; whilst she played with her knife and fork, and talked to her father-in-law, and shot sweet, bright, loving glances in my direction, that promised a world of pleasure as soon as breakfast should be concluded.

'Have you nothing to tell me about your tour, my darling?' I said some hours afterwards, when we had for the time exhausted our stock of mutual congratulation and delight at being together again, and were sitting cosily beside the fire.

'Nothing but what you know, dear mothie. It was all very beautiful—Italy especially—but I don't think we saw anything new. I recognised all the old scenes you and I took such delight in last year.' And my daughter sighed.

'Paris, at all events, was new to you, May?'

'Yes,' she answered shortly.

'You do not seem to have enjoyed your stay in Paris, my darling!'

'Mothie dear, don't ask me! I liked the city well enough, but I hated the people. O, how I

detested Madame de Brillac no words can say !

' But why did you stay so long with her, then ? '

' Lord Eustace wished it to be so ; of course I had no alternative. You and your paragon don't seem to hit it off so well as you used to do, mothie,' she added, after a pause, as she looked up searchingly into my face. The tone pained me. I had suspected all was not so happy between May and her husband as I had hoped it would be. Now I was sure of it.

' I wish you would not mention Lord Eustace in those terms, my darling child. They do not sound becoming from his wife's lips.'

She gave a slight shrug of impatience.

' How shall I call him ? By what names did you designate your Hugh, mothie ? I suppose all husbands are the same delightful creatures.'

' I could never find a name good enough by which to call your father, my own child.'

' Ah, he was a *rara avis*. And Lord Eustace is *not*. At least in my opinion !'

' May, be careful !' I said imploringly.

' Well, mothie, what would you have ? Here I am, the wife of a lord, with plenty of houses and money—and a large fortune and a coronet in prospect—having made what grandmamma calls "the best match of the season." Having accomplished my duty so far in the station of life in which it has pleased God to call me (as the Church-of-England Catechism says), I may surely be allowed the small privilege of speaking of my husband as I like !'

' You are as flippant as ever, my child.'

' Am I, mother, am I ? O, I wish I were !' she went on impetuously as she sank sobbing at my feet.

' May, May ! my own darling ! what is this ?'

' O mother, why did they ever let me marry him ?' she gasped in her emotion. ' Why did grandmamma go on urging me to the step ? Why did my aunts say it was a wonderful stroke of good fortune ? Why—why was I so blind as not to see what he was for myself, and to mind my own feelings as you begged me to do ?'

She was crying as if her heart would break, and I was too horror-struck to do more than support and soothe her.

' My own, own child !' I cried.

I felt that I ought to stop her confession ; but she was so young, and it seemed so hard she should not confide in her mother.

' I cannot love him—I cannot love him !' she went on hysterically. ' O mothie, mothie ! what shall I do ?'

What should she do ? What should I do ?

My anguish at her question was too great for words. I was half-choked with my emotion.

At last, by a violent effort, I controlled myself sufficiently to reason with her. She might have commenced her married life unhappily ; she had been so much spoiled and petted at home that she might have found it difficult at first to submit to discipline and coercion ; there was a great difference between her husband's age and hers, and he might have misunderstood the caprice and vagaries of such a child. But it was impossible—it must be impossible—that May's married life was not to prove a happy one.

O my child ! my own child ! was it for *this* that I had sacrificed myself ?

Such were the bitter thoughts that coursed through my mind as I fondled the dear head bent upon

my knee and kissed the golden braids that crowned it.

'May, my darling,' I commenced as soon as I could command my voice, 'I do not wish to check your confidence in me, but I cannot let you speak so of your husband. I was afraid—I was terribly afraid—at the time of your marriage that you did not love him as warmly as you should have done. I tried very hard to make my meaning clear to you. I spoke openly of it to your grandmother and Lord Eustace, but no one would listen to me. Then all I could do was to hope and pray. And I have prayed, my child, through all these weary months of separation, very fervently that your happiness might be secured to you, and I cannot but believe that my prayers will be answered. Complete content is not always attained at the outset of married life, May; for most husbands and wives have much to learn concerning each other's dispositions and temperaments, before things go smoothly. But if you will be patient, my darling, and submissive, it is sure to come in time. Lord Eustace cannot fail to appreciate an attempt to do your duty. I should have thought I might say more of him than this,' I added, with a sigh; 'I imagined he was so much in love with you.'

She had been hiding her dear face on my breast, but at these words she raised it, flushed and tear-stained, but indignant.

'*In love!*' she repeated, with an emphatic scorn that was more suitable to seventy than seventeen—'in love! Yes; that is just what Lord Eustace was with me. But, mother dear, *that* sort of love lasts just as long as it suits the lover, and no longer.'

'And you can say this after six months' marriage?' I exclaimed.

'Six months! Why, he was

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making love to another woman before we had been married *two!*'

'May, you *must* be mistaken! You have permitted jealousy to lead your better judgment astray.'

'I have never been jealous of him, mother; but I *have* been jealous of my position. And I was not mistaken. Everybody knew it. Even my servants (if you condescended to question them) would tell you it was the common talk.'

I sat, listening to her revelations, dumbfounded. Here was a phase of married life for which my experience had totally unprepared me. And to think that he—he—could have treated my child thus! O, how my blood boiled with indignation!

'You were surprised to hear I didn't care for Paris,' May went on, after a pause—she had ceased crying now, though her face bore traces of her tears. 'How could I care for it! Eustace was always away with his friends—taking Madame de Brillac to the play or opera, or dining with her in the Bois, whilst *I* was left to the company of her sisters. And then, to crown all, when I complained of his neglect to me, he had the assurance to tell me to my face that there had been some very tender relations between Madame de Brillac and himself in days gone by, and the least he could do under the present embarrassing circumstances was to show her that he still valued her friendship.'

'Lord Eustace told you this himself?' I gasped.

'Of course he did, mother; and with all the effrontery of an Irishman. That was the reason we returned home so suddenly. I believe he would have remained there till Doomsday else. He found Madame de Brillac's *friendship* so delightful; but I insisted upon leaving the house. I said

I should leave him else. And so he consented to come back for Christmas to Castle Rivers.

'O May! May! May!'

'Don't cry, dear darling. You've got me back again, you see, at last—all to yourself—and I don't know whether it is not best so, after all. I should not have cared for any man to come between you and me, mother.'

'And I loved him so!' I blurted out in my distress; but, fortunately for both of us, May did not notice the warmth of the expression.

'I know you did—your paragon!—as I used to call him. You thought him perfection, didn't you, mother? Well, it can't be helped; we've both been deceived, and we must make the best of a bad job. But if it were not for *you*,' cried my child, as she fell into my arms again, 'I don't know how I should bear it. But you will *never*, *never* leave me, mother, will you?'

'Never! never!' I reiterated firmly, as I clasped her to my bosom, and neither of us appeared to remember that the fulfilment of that promise must depend upon the consent of another.

CHAPTER XXXV.

'YOU WILL SEPARATE US?'

IT was at this juncture Lord Eustace came in and interrupted us. He did not look pleased at witnessing our close embrace, still less at the traces of tears on his young wife's cheek.

'Are you not well?' he inquired curtly.

'Quite well, thank you,' she answered in the same tone, 'and quite comfortable.'

'Had you not better sit on a chair?'

'I prefer my mother's knees.'

'My sister is just going out in the carriage. She expected you to drive with her.'

'Blessed are they who expect nothing, for they shall not be disappointed,' said May lightly.

'Had you not better go with Lady Selina, May?' I suggested; 'the fresh air will do you good this bright afternoon.'

'Will you come too, mother?'

'If you wish it, dear, and there's room in the carriage.'

'There's plenty of room. Come along then; for I sha'n't go without you,' cried wilful May, as, without further reference to her husband, she pulled me out of the room.

Apparently there was no fear mixed with her dislike of him. The thought was a consolation to me. My child had not that extra pain added to her troubles.

But how came it that a determined man like Lord Eustace permitted a child—and his wife—to treat him so cavalierly? The only solution I could find to this question was, that notwithstanding her youth and her position, he stood in awe of what he had (probably in a moment of irritation) put it in her power to say against him.

But, O, how much more my poor child seemed to want my love and protection and sympathy now than she had done since her helpless infancy! My heart echoed the promise she had exacted from me, and I felt that I must never, never leave her. At least I felt so until a few days afterwards.

About that time there happened to arise a discussion at the breakfast-table relating to Lord and Lady Eustace visiting Gentian's Cross. Lady Power had written to decline coming to Castle Rivers, on account of the inclement season, and to beg that as soon as

their guests had departed she might have the pleasure of receiving them at her house instead, which under the circumstances appeared the most natural thing for her to desire and for them to do.

Lord Riversdale and his daughter had already fixed the date of their return to Dublin, and there was no obstacle therefore to the young people leaving Castle Rivers when they chose.

'And you, Mrs. Power?' inquired Lord Eustace of me.

I hesitated. I had fully intended to go to Gentian's Cross with them.

'O, mothie's coming with us! Aren't you, darling?' said May.

'I thought of it, May. I know Lady Power is always glad to see me.'

'Of course she is. And what else could you do? You didn't think we were going to leave you behind, all by yourself—did you?'

'That would hardly have been polite,' interposed her husband courteously but coldly, 'and necessarily I never contemplated such a proceeding. But I thought Mrs. Power might have business at her own home.'

'Have you fixed on a place of residence yet?' inquired Lord Riversdale.

Now, though I had told May, and fully believed that a double household never succeeds in the long-run, I must confess that I had had a secret hankering to make the experiment with my daughter and son-in-law, which desire on my part had been fostered by what May had told me of the assurances Lord Eustace gave her before their marriage that she should never be separated from me. For this reason I had delayed to choose a place of residence. I did not expect, and did not wish, to take up my

abode entirely with my children; and I had dreamt of renting a small house, possibly in Dublin or London, to which I could retreat when they went visiting, or their house was full, but still I hoped to pass the majority of my time in the presence of my beloved daughter. Now something in Lord Eustace's tone or the confidences I had received from May made me feel shy of communicating my half-formed plans to them.

'I have not,' I said, in answer to the old earl's question. 'It is a difficult matter to decide.'

'What are you talking of?' cried May authoritatively. 'The decision has been made ages ago. Mother's going to live with us. Eustace always said so before we were married.'

'O, indeed!' said her father-in-law, and reappled himself to his breakfast.

Lord Eustace said nothing, and I felt awkward and confused.

'That was all nonsense, darling,' I said to May lightly. 'I shall have a snug little cottage to myself before long, and a room in it perhaps for Eustace and you.'

'You will have no such thing,' replied my child. 'I'll pull it down about your ears if you attempt anything of the sort. Now, don't be silly, mother. You know very well that I couldn't live without you, and if you go away from Castle Rivers I shall go too.'

'Silly girl!' I said, laughing.

But still Lord Eustace said nothing in furtherance of his wife's wishes, but stood before the fire picking his teeth and regarding us fixedly.

'If you're done joking, Frances,' he interposed after a while, 'perhaps you'll fix on what day we shall go to Gentian's Cross.'

'I don't care. When shall we go, mothie?'

'It is for you to decide,' said her husband firmly. Still she turned to me.

'Will the twentieth suit you, darling?'

'Of course, of course,' I said hurriedly in an undertone, wishing to prevent anything unpleasant. 'Don't ask me, May.'

'I shall ask you,' replied the imperious child in loud voice. 'You're the first person to be considered. We'll go on the twentieth, Eustace, as it will suit mother,' she continued.

'Perhaps it will not suit me,' he answered.

'Very well, then, we *won't* go. It's very easily decided. Will you ride this morning, Selina?'

'With pleasure,' said Lady Selina Anerley.

'You cannot have your horses,' remarked her brother, with a frown.

'Why not?' inquired May.

'Because I've sent them out.'

'Then we'll have others.'

'There are no others.'

'Where are the brown and the bay?'

'They are not at your disposal.'

'But where are they?'

'That is my business!'

'Well, never mind. I daresay we can do without them,' replied May, as we rose from table.

But she knew, and I knew, and every one present knew, that her husband had a design to thwart her by his refusal. She did not mention the subject to me as we went up-stairs together, and I respected her reticence by silence. However much I valued my dear child's confidence, and prayed it might never be withdrawn from me, I still felt that to permit her to speak her whole mind concerning Lord Eustace's conduct was neither wholesome for May nor honourable in my-

self. I could not refuse to listen when she came with her young heart bursting with disappointment to my arms, for that might have had a more dangerous effect than the other; but I would not encourage her to speak of the scene that had just passed. So we parted with a kiss at our respective bedroom-doors that morning, I to secure my usual quiet hour for reading, she, as I supposed, to hold a conference with the housekeeper.

I had not been engaged upon my book for more than half an hour perhaps, when I heard the sound of horses' feet upon the gravel outside my window, and, thinking that a visitor had arrived, I rose to ascertain who it was. What was my surprise, however, to see May, dressed in a dark-blue cloth habit and mounted on a tall black horse, galloping as hard as she could down the Castle drive, followed by a groom riding a small chestnut mare. I concluded that she had coaxed Lord Eustace into letting her ride after all, but thought it strange she should not have looked into my door as she passed down-stairs, to tell me her intention. I watched her, as she passed out of sight, with proud and loving eyes. She sat her horse so well, her pliant figure swayed with each movement of the animal, and her golden braids of hair, coiled tightly round her head, glistened as they caught the rays of the morning sun. I was still gazing at the point where she had disappeared, and thanking God for her youth and strength and beauty, when a tap sounded on my bedroom-door. I gave permission to enter, and Lady Selina Anerley appeared. Her face looked unusually pale, and I could see at once that she was trembling.

'O Mrs. Power,' she exclaimed, 'there is such a dreadful fuss going on down-stairs, and I am so frightened!'

'My dear, what is the matter?'

'May!' she ejaculated.

'She has just gone out on horseback. I have been watching her ride down the drive, and wondering you were not with her.'

'But Eustace is so very angry. You heard him forbid her riding at breakfast, and she went and ordered that horse to be saddled for herself in defiance of his orders. And it's such a dangerous horse, Mrs. Power. Eustace says no woman can ride it with safety; she'll be thrown to a certainty; and he has discharged the groom that saddled it; and he is swearing so dreadfully about the whole business; and O, Mrs. Power, if you could speak to him!'

'Stop! I said feebly, 'stop!'

I had only heard that one word 'dangerous.'

'Is the horse *really* not safe?' I asked with trembling lips, 'or does your brother say so because he is angry?'

'No! Really, Mrs. Power, it is an awful animal even for men to mount, and the groom says he told Lady Eustace so himself. But she was determined to ride him. She threatened the man with dismissal if he did not saddle him. And now Eustace has dismissed the poor fellow.'

'O, never mind the man! Think of my child! I cried excitedly. 'What are they doing? What have they done? Has Lord Eustace followed her?'

'No; he is in the dining-room.'

'Let me go to him!' I exclaimed; pushing past Lady Selina, I ran down to the apartment we had just left. I ran up to Eustace Anerley as though no coolness had ever arisen between us. I

could think of nothing but what might happen to my child.

'Eustace! Eustace!' I burst forth in my agony; 'for God's sake tell me, is there any danger?'

He was alone, and standing quietly on the hearthrug, though the traces of anger were still visible in his flushed cheeks and sparkling eyes. He turned and regarded me steadfastly.

'Danger in what?' he demanded.

'To my darling!—with this dreadful horse. Lady Selina says she will be thrown! You do not think it possible?'

'I do think it possible; more than possible—probable! Frances has chosen to act in direct defiance of my wishes, and the consequences must rest on her own head.'

'But surely you will follow and warn her?'

'I really don't see the use of it. In the first place, I don't know which road she has taken; in the second, it is very unlikely she would listen to me if I did meet her. A wife who is openly disobedient is not likely to be secretly persuaded—'

'But she did not know—she could not have known,' I continued in the utmost distress, 'that her disobedience was attended by so much danger. O Lord Eustace, she is such a child—such a wilful spoilt child! Have pity on her and on me, and take means to prevent any accident happening to her!'

'What do you wish me to do?' he said unconcernedly.

'Take another horse, and follow her!'

'The worst advice you could give. The sight of me would probably induce her to accelerate her speed, and bring about the very catastrophe you dread. The animal she is riding will not bear the presence of other horses. If

she meets any riders on the road, or her groom follows her too closely, I wouldn't give twopence for her chance of reaching home with all her bones unbroken. He'll bolt with her across country, as sure as a bird !

'O my God ! my God ! what shall I do ?' I screamed ; 'what shall I do to save her ?' I believe I had some thoughts of rushing out into the open air just as I was, but Lord Eustace laid his hand upon my arm and forced me into a seat.

'It is a painful position for both of us, Mrs. Power,' he said ; 'but the only thing we can do is to wait patiently for the result. You must remember that Frances has brought this entirely on herself.'

'What comfort will that be to me,' I cried despairingly, 'if I receive her back with broken limbs—or worse ! O Lord Eustace, I know she has been wilful and disobedient—I can see you are neither of you so happy in your marriage as you ought to be ; but if you ever cared for me—if you ever loved me even a little—I went on, hardly knowing what I said—'have pity on me now !'

'If I ever cared for you—even a little !' he repeated deliberately. 'You know I cared for you—you know too how you requited my care !'

'Then why cannot you make my child happy ?' I sobbed. 'You see what she is to me—all the world—all the world ! And yet you can break her heart and mine—God knows why !'

'God knows why !' he again repeated. 'And so should you.'

'I !' I exclaimed, lifting my tearful face to his in my astonishment ; 'I ?'

'Yes, you ! You, the woman who played fast and loose with me for your own amusement—

who engaged my attentions until I had every reason to believe you would requite them, and then cast me off like an old glove that suited your purpose no longer ; confessed unblushingly that you had only been trifling with my feelings, and threw me back upon myself, the world, and my evil passions, for comfort and relief—you, who without cause treated me thus, should best know why your daughter's heart is in danger of being broken, for it was you—and you alone—who rendered mine callous and indifferent !

The injustice of his taunts made me forget everything but themselves. I longed to tell him all. To entreat him, for the sake of the bitter sacrifice I had made, to love and cherish my child. But I could not, I dared not. The time was over for such a revelation. My friend might have heard it. It was impossible I could tell it to *my son-in-law*.

So I sat there before him, cowering like a convicted criminal, although I knew that my conscience was free from all offence, except the crime of loving the creature God had committed to my care too well for my own happiness.

'Don't speak of that now,' I said imploringly ; 'it is most unbecoming our present position towards each other, and it is all past and done with.'

'So you imagine—your wish, perhaps, being father to your thought—that is, if you ever take the trouble to bestow a thought upon me. But let me tell you, Mrs. Power, that it is *not* past and done with, and that, as far as I am concerned, it never will be. O, don't look shocked ! I am not going to pollute your maternal ears by any allusion to the feelings I once entertained for you. I am not even prepared to state

that a vestige of them remains ; but I have not forgotten. And did it never strike you that the reason I passed by all the belles of the season, to fix my choice upon an unformed girl like your daughter, was not so much to please myself—as to displease you ?

'Not to please yourself,' I ejaculated, 'when you were in love with her !'

'Bah ! About as much in love with her as you were with me. Do you suppose that the man who had selected *you* for his wife one season could so utterly change his opinions as to prefer your school-girl the next ? Do I look as if I had a taste for unripe fruit ? But you are feigning ignorance to me as you once feigned interest.'

'Lord Eustace, you are doing me a great injustice,' I said warmly. 'I am not feigning. I am entirely in earnest when I say that, if you did not marry my poor child for love, I have no conception why you married her at all—considering that I cannot do you the wrong to suppose you chose her for her money.'

'Not entirely,' he answered coolly; 'although, without the prospective dowry, I scarcely think Miss Power would ever have been transformed into Lady Eustace Annerley. But I had a higher motive for marrying her than that—higher, that is to say, in my own ideas. There is a very strong feeling of revenge in my nature, Mrs. Power, and I had a very strong reason to excite it. You had disappointed me. I determined to disappoint you, and I knew—'

'You knew no more deadly weapon could be placed in your cruel hand than the welfare of my child ! And so you grasped it—and so you use it ! O Eustace Annerley, can you be a *man* to

plan and carry out so base and cowardly a revenge as this ?'

'I believe I am. At all events, there was a time when your love might have made me so.'

'You must not—you shall not—speak to me of that time now !'

'Very good ! Then we will confine ourselves entirely to the present. And my present determination is that my wife and your daughter shall submit herself to the yoke she has voluntarily adopted, and that without any of the drawbacks arising from undue confidence and sympathy in her disobedience.'

'You mean that you will separate us ?' I exclaimed.

'If Frances will not show me at least outward respect and obedience whilst you are present—yes.'

'O my God !' I said, below my breath.

'I am not at all sure it will not be the best thing for her,' he went on with perfect self-command ; 'for you have spoiled her, and encouraged her wilfulness to that degree, that she is becoming simply unbearable. And so long as you foster the old feeling of self-assertion by your presence, I am afraid there is very little chance of her ever changing her course of conduct, which would be extremely unpleasant to me, and result in something more than unpleasant to herself.'

'You do not wish me to live at Castle Rivers ?' I said interrogatively.

I awaited his answer as if it had been my deathblow; but I felt I must know the worst at once.

'I should never be so rude, I hope, as to turn any lady out of my own house ; but, if you ask my candid opinion, I say decidedly it would be advisable you

should have your separate place of residence.'

'Lord Eustace,' you need say no more. It is impossible to mistake your meaning; and you knew, when you expressed it, that my pride would prevent my even postulating with you on the subject.'

'You save me a very unpleasant task by your ready acquiescence, Mrs. Power; and I thank you for your courtesy.'

The calm gentlemanly tone was so far harder to bear at that moment than any amount of anger would have been, that it cut into my heart like a knife.

'O, you have your revenge, indeed!' I exclaimed brokenly, as my head sunk down upon my outstretched arms.

'I hope you will not look on it entirely in that light,' he went on, with the same provoking calmness; 'although I have had occasion to make use of the word "revenge" in our conversation, it has an ugly sound and is seldom mentioned in polite society. It is better to call our difference of opinion by some other name, or, better still, not to mention it at all. Nothing can be more natural than (your daughter being married) you should require a house of your own. The fact of your residing at Castle Rivers would be far more likely to excite comment.'

'But you will not *quite* separate us!' I said imploringly. He had insulted me—this man—on my tenderest point. I saw him now in his true colours—as malicious, designing, and revengeful—yet I stooped to plead with him for *her* sake—the sake of my own child.

'Pray don't think so badly of me. I have no wish or intention of the kind—you will visit us, I trust, as often as may be convenient to yourself, or usual for

ladies standing in the same relationship to do. But I must request—more than that, *demand*—that during the time I have the honour to receive you under my roof, you are careful not to influence my wife to rebel against my just authority.'

'I never have!' I said indignanty.

'Perhaps not, in so many words, but she evidently accepts your caresses and expressions of sympathy as encouragement in her disobedience, which indeed they would appear to be to any one.'

I felt I could continue the conversation no longer. I was trembling under the indignities he had offered me.

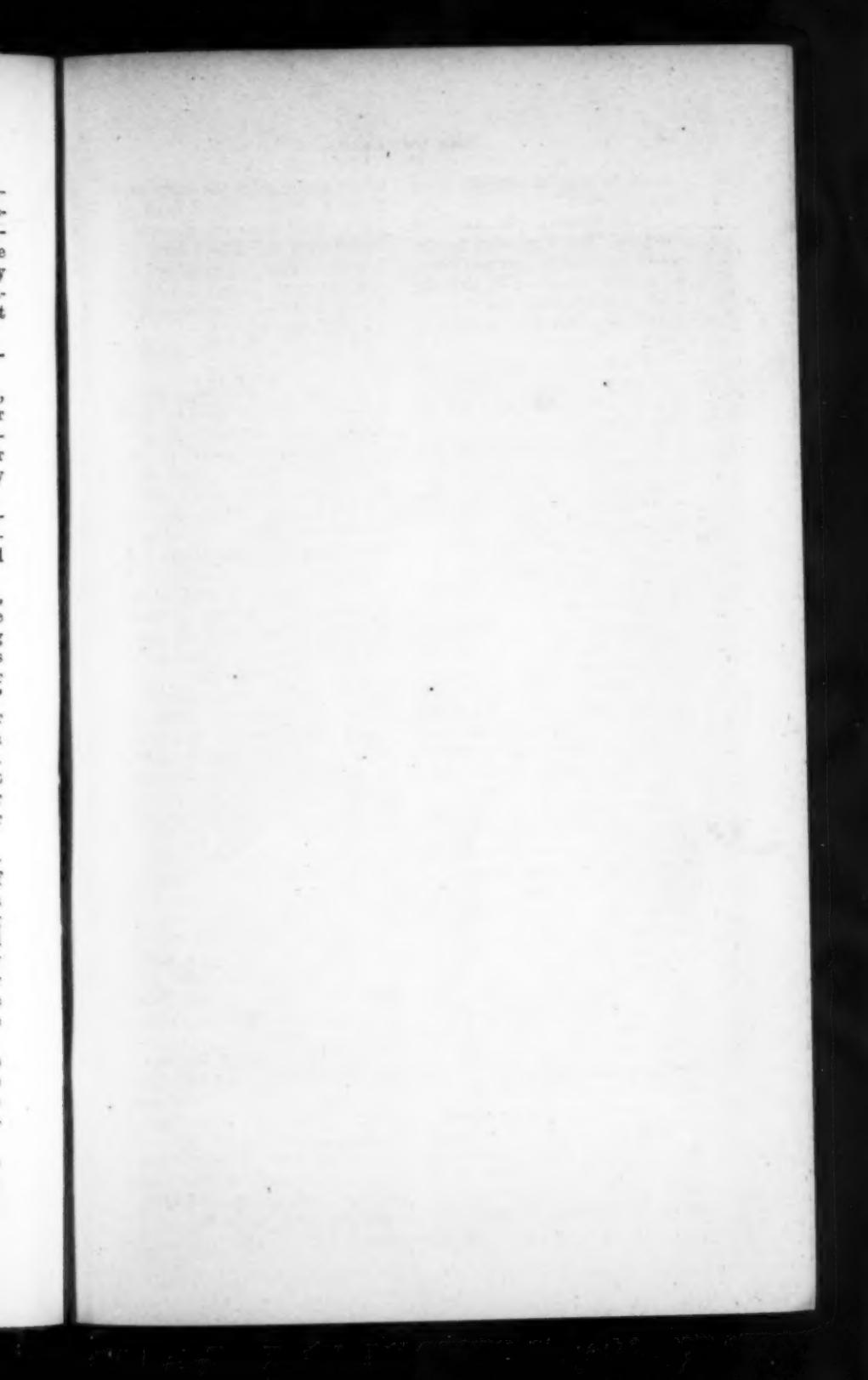
'Lord Eustace,' I said, rising, 'I have but one request to make of you. May imagines I am going to live with her. She says it was a promise of yours before your marriage.' ('A total mistake,' he said, *en parenthèse*.) 'Let her imagine that it is my own wish to have a separate establishment. Let me break to her the news that it is to be so. Do not let her imagine *her husband* turned her mother from his doors.'

'You take altogether too romantic and highflown a view of the case,' he replied; 'but I can have no objection to your carrying out your own desire with regard to telling her the news—only be good enough to make her thoroughly understand it will be of no use appealing to me in the matter.'

I did not attempt to argue with him further. My self-pride and dignity had already been too deeply wounded by the communication.

I turned from the spot where I had been sitting; and, dizzy with surprise, consternation, and grief, I staggered from the room.

(To be continued.)





THE NOON OF LIFE.

See the Verses.

THE NOON OF LIFE.

STAY one moment, ere you leave me:
Having left me, time will show
You were thoughtless to deserve me;
I was mad to love you so.
Though you say our lives meet never,
Though I tell of kinder times,
You will hold me bound for ever
By your everlasting gone.

You will find, *forsooth*,
If you'll take the pain to try,
Many a better man and far a
Richer lover-lord than I.
Though the past you try to smother,
Saying truly we must part,
Dearest, you may find another,
Never such a faithful heart.

Life may be a dark December,
Through the long approaching years,
When your folly I remember,
My sad eyes may fill with tears,
You may drown my heart in sorrow,
When my fancy sighs your name,
Break another heart to morrow,
I shall ever be the same.

When I dream of love mistaken,
When the evening lamp is lit,
When I feel I am forsaken,
When discomfited I sit;
When the spring comes—then you must—
I may think it need to live:
Your reproach is to forget me,
My revenge is to forgive.

CLEMENT MOORE.

OFF AND AWAY!

'No nation,' said Albert Smith, 'makes such a fuss about its tea-kettle comforts as the English, and no nation is so notoriously anxious to get away from them.' Indeed, this is true enough. There is no people in the world talks so much of home pleasures, the home advantages, as we do ; there is no place where 'Home, sweet home !' is howled more enthusiastically than it is in Great Britain—from the Land's End to John o' Groat's; and yet home, be it ever so humble or magnificent, is the place we are always anxious to flee from. That the Englishman's house is his castle we are well aware ; but I am inclined to think the Englishman is never so happy as when he hauls down his flag, pulls up his drawbridge, drops the portcullis, puts his retainers on board-wages, and goes wandering about strange countries in search of adventure. Your Briton is always glad of some excuse for leaving his castle ; and although this year times are said to be bad, and every one is lamenting the lack of money, castles are being deserted earlier than usual.

Possibly people are discovering that tradesmen are endeavouring to compensate themselves for one of the worst seasons on record by charging exorbitant prices for everything, and Paterfamilias has come to the conclusion that he will be less fleeced and more comfortable at some foreign bathing station, some English seaside resort, at his country house or his villa by the Thames. I do not know whether this may be the case or not, but this I do know,

that London is thinning this year much earlier than usual. Evidence may be seen of this everywhere. In the Row the ranks of the 'Bright Brigade' have been considerably thinned ; the Drive is no longer blocked of an afternoon ; Bond-street is passable ; you have a chance of seeing Mr. Millais's landscape at the Royal Academy ; and you are able to find a chair at the Zoo on Sunday. If you require further evidence of the general exodus, take a turn through the squares. Note, if you please, the shuttered windows, the down-pulled blinds, and the furniture in holland jackets. See the cabs piled high with luggage. Look in any time you please at any railway station you like, and see how booking-clerks are becoming thin with anxiety ; note how porters perspire and vociferate ; observe how guards and station-masters are well-nigh driven frantic. Ask Messrs. Cook & Son how their excursion *coupons* are going off ; make inquiry of Mr. John Murray as to the number of his famous red books he has disposed of during the last fortnight ; get Mr. W. J. Adams to tell you whether his ubiquitous *Bradshaw*—continental and otherwise—is still in 'brisk demand,' and then you will be able to form some idea of the truth of my assertion that this year people are 'off and away' earlier than usual.

Undoubtedly this preparation for flight, this 'pluming of wings,' is by no means the least enjoyable portion of an autumn trip. All is anticipation : your holiday is yet to come, and you make sure it

will be enjoyable. When you return it is a very different matter. Your holiday is then finished, and it possibly has not been the success you expected : you may have had bad weather, you may have gone to some uninteresting place, and you may have quarrelled with your travelling companion. Another thing, anticipation is always better than retrospection ; for a tolerable experience in sub-lunar saunterings leads me to the belief that expectations are seldom realised and never exceeded. Thus I am inclined to think you often get the cream of your holiday, the sparkle of the champagne of idleness, before your flight takes place.

There is an especial joy in getting your wings into proper order. With what glee is the ancient portmanteau or the travel-stained knapsack hauled out of the lumber-room ! How lovingly is it dusted, and how carefully are its repairs looked after ! What a world of associations are awakened, and what a number of pleasant reminiscences occur, when we once more see those queerly-printed foreign labels and tickets with which our *impedimenta* is decorated ! Then there is one's tailor to be looked after. One's tailor is always especially awkward, not to say contumacious, at these times. The fact is, everybody is going to start at once, and everybody wants his new tweed suit at the same time. Everybody has got some new craze with regard to the build of a country jacket, and everybody has got some especial theory as to pockets, and you possibly get your own jacket in which somebody else's theory with regard to pockets has been exploited. This will of course involve another visit to your tailor, and you will possibly use a deal of impressive language ; you will possibly find this somewhat irritating in hot weather,

but there is a certain amount of pleasurable excitement about the business that is by no means to be despised. Similar visits to your bootmaker and hatter will bring about equally agreeable results.

And then there is the planning of your tour ! How many tours I have taken without stirring from my own room ! What extensive trips I have accomplished on the map, how many miles of railway have I travelled over on the pages of *Bradshaw*, and what a number of excellent hotels I have visited on the leaves of *Murray* ! An old battered, dirty, ragged, bleached *Murray* of many years' standing, with tattered maps, with side-notes in pencil and in ink, is a textbook whence I could preach many a week-day sermon. Ever since I was eight years old I have had a liking for the planning of tours. The vast journeys that I have never undertaken, the perilous exploits in which I never took part, would fill many volumes, and would, I fancy, be quite as entertaining and nearly as truthful as many of the histories of travel and adventure that have been put forward for the benefit of the British public. However, it certainly is no bad idea, if you are short of time or of money, and are unable to get away for a holiday, to take a cheap trip without stirring outside your own door. Just sit yourself down with some maps, a *Murray*, a *Bradshaw*, and a *Baedeker*, and prick out a tour ; you will be surprised what an amount of pleasure you will get out of the proceeding.

A man travelling by himself or with a friend is an entirely different matter from the start of Paterfamilias and his brood for their autumn holiday. That is 'quite another pair of wings,' or rather a great many other pairs of wings. I really don't know that Paterfamilias has much fun over these

preparations; and if he leaves them to somebody else and goes down and dines quietly at his club, I am not altogether disposed to blame him. He has his work cut out, I can tell you, when the actual flitting takes place: when there is a perfect procession of cabs at his door, when there are endless portmanteaus, countless boxes, innumerable baskets—to say nothing of hand-bags, hampers, perambulators, baths, berceau-nettes, and babies to look after. I saw a wonderful specimen of this kind of thing at the Charing-cross Station only an hour ago. I am really afraid to say how many tickets Mr. Paterfamilias was holding in his mouth while he was seeing the luggage labelled, or what immense sums he had to pay for overweight. He had a 'family carriage'—'quiver,' I was going to say—crammed with children, and I suppose he must have been a happy man, for he certainly had his carriage full of them. I noticed a governess, a nurse, a couple of under-nurses, and a man-servant. There were two boys. There were a number of girls, from Troublesome Ten, in short frock and frilled pantalettes, to Sweet Seventeen in Rubens hat and 'pull-back' skirt. There was Materfamilias, very stout and somewhat cross. It is all very well to laugh, but I can tell you I do not think Paterfamilias looked at the matter in the light of a joke at all. I saw him cast envious glances at young Flitterby, who arrived just before the train started, and was put into a smoking-carriage, with a big Partagas in his mouth, and a small portmanteau under his feet, and bound for a two months' trip anywhere you please on the Continent.

I do not know though, after all, whether Paterfamilias does not

'score' in the long-run. Flitterby has a life of perpetual worry and excitement on his trip, whereas the proprietor of the endless luggage and countless children certainly does enjoy a little quiet when he at last settles down at Dimplebeach. A railway station is a rare place for moralising at this period of the year, and if I were not continually being prodded in the ribs by porters, having heavy trunks rolled over my toes, and running the risk of having a label pasted on my back and being violently hurled into the luggage-van, whether I will or no, I might possibly 'improve the occasion' to considerable length. But yet one cannot help speculating where all these vast crowds are going to, how they will enjoy themselves, and what they will do with themselves now they are once more 'off and away!'

'Off and away!' What a bright pleasant sound it has, think you, as the train forges slowly out of the station! How a thousand and one pleasant little episodes of seaside existence occur to you on the instant! Does it not recall to you the early-morning dip!—none of your ramshackle machines in shallow water if you please, but a good honest header from a boat on the open sea, the brisk walk across the sands afterwards, and then the enormous breakfast, with an appetite you would deem impossible in town. Then occurs to you the quiet meditation over the after-breakfast pipe, in the tamisk-hedged garden, the sweet-scented clover-field, or beneath the quaint little flag-staff, gazing out upon 'the countless dimples of the smiling sea,' as they come and go and sparkle in the bright sunshine! Ah, dreamy mornings on the beach, dozing over your favourite author, under the shadow of an old fishing-boat, or gazing into

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the pure gray eyes of Someone, and whispering to the accompaniment of sweet wave-music in a minor key ! O, the delight of being lazily in love ! Why is the illusion to be always broken by unfeeling relations, who want to know what your intentions are, and who make unpleasant and unreasonable remarks with regard to marriage settlements ?

'Off and away !' Whither ? To merry Margate, where the loungers on the jetty rejoice and the dancers at the Hall-by-the-Sea are exceeding glad ; to secluded Broadstairs, where you may dream your time away and call back a thousand pleasant recollections as you gaze upon Bleak House ; to Ramsgate, with its sands as varied and as crowded as they were when Mr. Frith painted his famous picture ; to Folkestone, with its gay population, with its pleasant dinners at the Pavilion, with its loungers on the Lees ; to Dover, with its curious little cliques, its everlasting gossip, its Shakespeare's Cliff, and its Calais boat ; to Scarborough, with its endless amusements, its picnics, its bathing, its walks upon the Spa, its concerts, and its balls ; to sedate Whitby ; to Redcar, with its glorious sands ; to Saltburn-by-the-Sea ; to quiet secluded Seaton, where northern belles 'paddle' and show their pretty pink ankles, after the manner of the Ramsgate children ; to sober Hastings ; to deserted Herne Bay ; to pleasant Littlehampton ; to Lowestoft, Great Yarmouth, Deal, or Sandgate ? Shall we ride at Ventnor, or swim at Shanklin ? Shall we make a brief sojourn at Bournemouth, Bognor, or the Channel Islands ?

'Off and away !' Whither ? Shall we leave sea and shingle ? Shall we become indifferent to sea and sand ? Shall we haunt the loveliest

spots of the Upper Thames, and dream away our holiday there ? What do you say to a few weeks at the Red Lion at Henley, varied by occasional excursions to Mrs. Wyatt's at Wargrave, or luncheon at Medmenham Abbey ? How would it suit you to dream in a punt up at Pangbourne or Goring, drift lazily in your canoe past Maple-Durham, or moon beneath the woods at Cliveden ? Would you not be content to pass a few days' delicious idleness at the Complete Angler at Great Marlow ; to bathe below the weir, and to make some pretence at fishing ? Would it not pleasure you hugely to pass a brief space of perfect quiet at the small quaint hotel at Sonning ? Could you not do a little exquisite mooning at Hambleton Lock ; and are you equal to a flirtation beneath the chestnuts at Ankerwyke ?

'Off and away !' Whither ? When once your passport is *vise*, and you have *Murray* in your hand, there is no limit whatever to the length of your tether. A crowd of delightful excursions at once present themselves to the mind. Bright Normandy, with its many attractions. Quaint Brittany, with its curious costumes and ancient monuments ; the Hague, Amsterdam, and Rotterdam. Cologne, with its cathedral and its evil smells, and its perfume of world-wide fame—the Cologne odour and the *eau-de-Cologne*, as some one wittily termed it. The Rhine, with its many pleasant villages nestling amid its vine-clad hills. Belgium and its quaint Flemish towns. Chamouni, and the whole of popular Switzerland ; Lucerne, the Rigi, and all the rest of it. Indeed, it is difficult to find a corner, however small, of Switzerland that is not 'popular' in the present day. Pleasant days of grayling-fishing in the Wutach, and

quiet abiding in pleasant villages in the least frequented part of the Schwarzwald. Most enjoyable times at Baveno, at Menaggio, at Lugano, at Varennia, at Bellagio, Locarno, and other pleasant white villages that wink and glitter in the sunshine round the edge of the Lakes of Como, Maggiore, and Lugano.

They come in a crowd, all these charming pictures ; they obscure one another, they jostle each other, they whirl like an ever-changing chromatope ; they dazzle me, and they make me weary. It is very hot. I pant for a breath of air, for I too am anxious to be off and away !

THE TINY TRAVELLER.

GOLD FOR SILVER.

A TERRACE with glinting shadows,
A trellis with clambering plants,
Red roses that budded and blossom'd
In lazy luxuriance ;

A fountain that plash'd in its basin,
A passion-flower train'd to a wall,
A solemn horizon of highlands,
And the sound of a waterfall.

You stood on the steps of the terrace,
Your beautiful face in the light ;
Your hair was aglow with the sunset,
Your eyes were agloom with the night.

Across gulfs of years and distance
I can conjure you even yet,
Though your face breaks not now from the background,
With all the tints I regret.

The years have defrauded your outline
Of many a curve and shade,
And the sunset surroundings about you,
And the glowing colours fade.

Ah, well ! it was not for beauty
That I threw up the cards of life,
When you told me you could not love me
Enough to become my wife.

But I loved you so well and unwisely,
I would not be answer'd so ;
I could not endure to behold you
And love you, and then forego !

So I waited and watch'd for a tide-turn,
And follow'd your steps afar,
And heard your voice in all music,
And saw your eyes in each star.

Did I flatter myself after service,
 And patience, and toil o'erpast,
 That, bless'd like a second Jacob,
 I should clasp my Rachel at last ?

I may have done, till one evening
 You had let me sit at your feet ;
 The wild bees humm'd in the sunshine,
 The bagpipes droned in the street.

You were at your ease as ever,
 Though my words would not come for bliss ;
 I was far too glad of your laughter
 To question, 'Laughs Love like this ?'

On a sudden the sky clouded over,
 And there fell a splash of rain,
 And a requiem wind came sighing
 And wailing against the pane.

Then a knock and a ring at the entrance,
 And a cry in my heart like despair ;
 For why should you brighten and listen
 To the fall of a foot on the stair ?

For me you had prattle and laughter—
 Could I be content with this,
 When you had not a word to say
 As your lifted eyes met his ?

Not that I blamed you for loving—
 He was better to look at than I ;
 I gave up the game when I saw him,
 Before he had cast the die.

There may be, perhaps, exceptions,
 But only to prove the rule,
 That give her a fool and a wise man,
 And a woman will choose the fool !

And yet I felt bitter against you ;
 You had not soften'd the stroke :
 You hardly, in your full gladness,
 E'en pitied the heart you broke.

The shadows still glint on your terrace,
 The creepers still clamber and stoop ;
 But the gravel is red with shed roses,
 And the sorrowful passion-flowers droop.

In my anger I long to forget you
 Through summers and winters ; yet
 I long to completely remember
 More than I long to forget !

O terrace ! O trellis ! O fountain !
 O face in the sunset glow !
 And so I still love this woman
 Who cheated me years ago !

MARGUERITE.

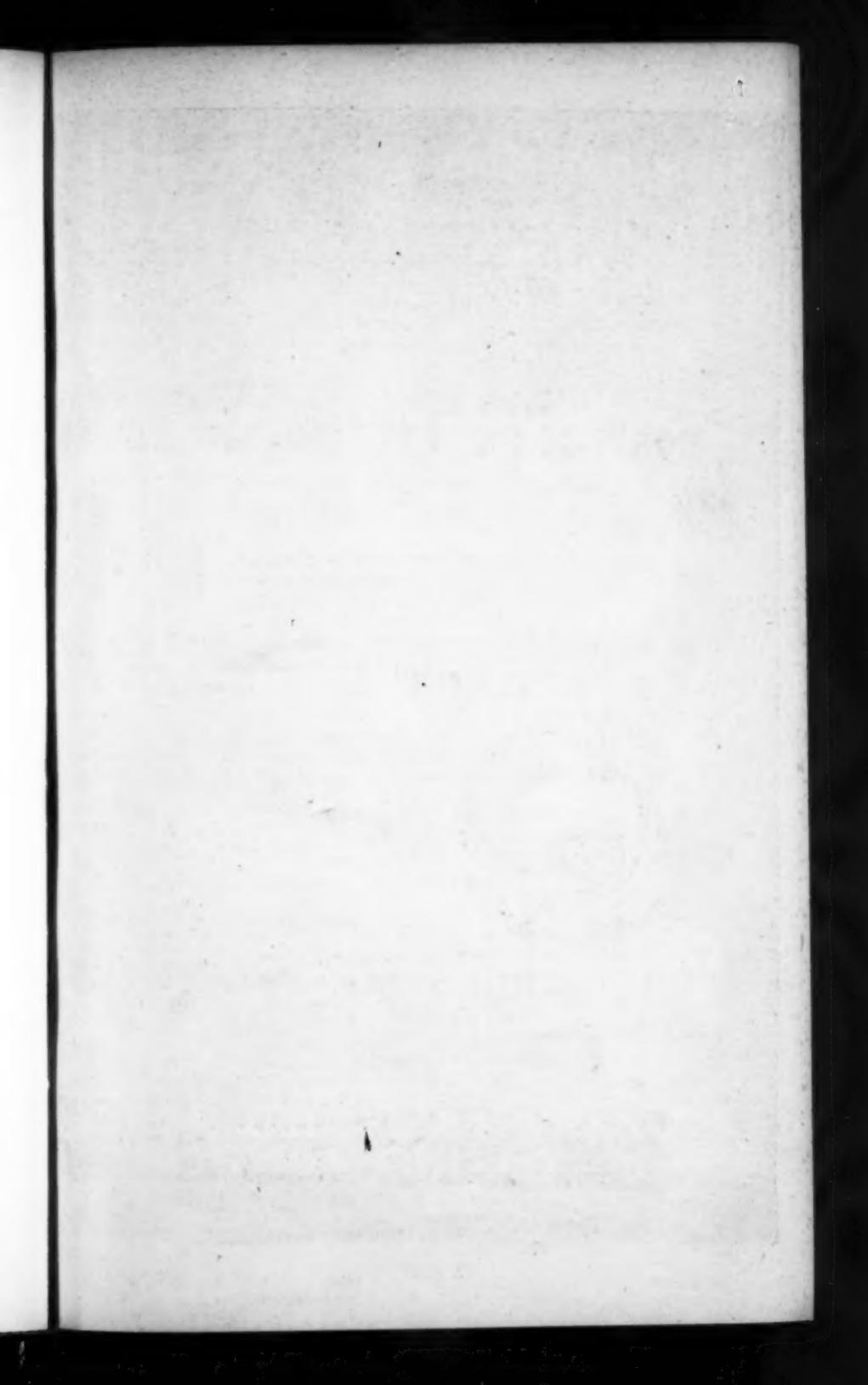
' He loves me—loves me not ! It seems
That Gretchen's love-spell yet hath power,
As confirmation of the dreams
That fill a maiden's every hour.
As erst men sought in Virgil's page,
She bids the flower her life foretell :
May such inquirers in each age
Find answer in ' he loves me well !'

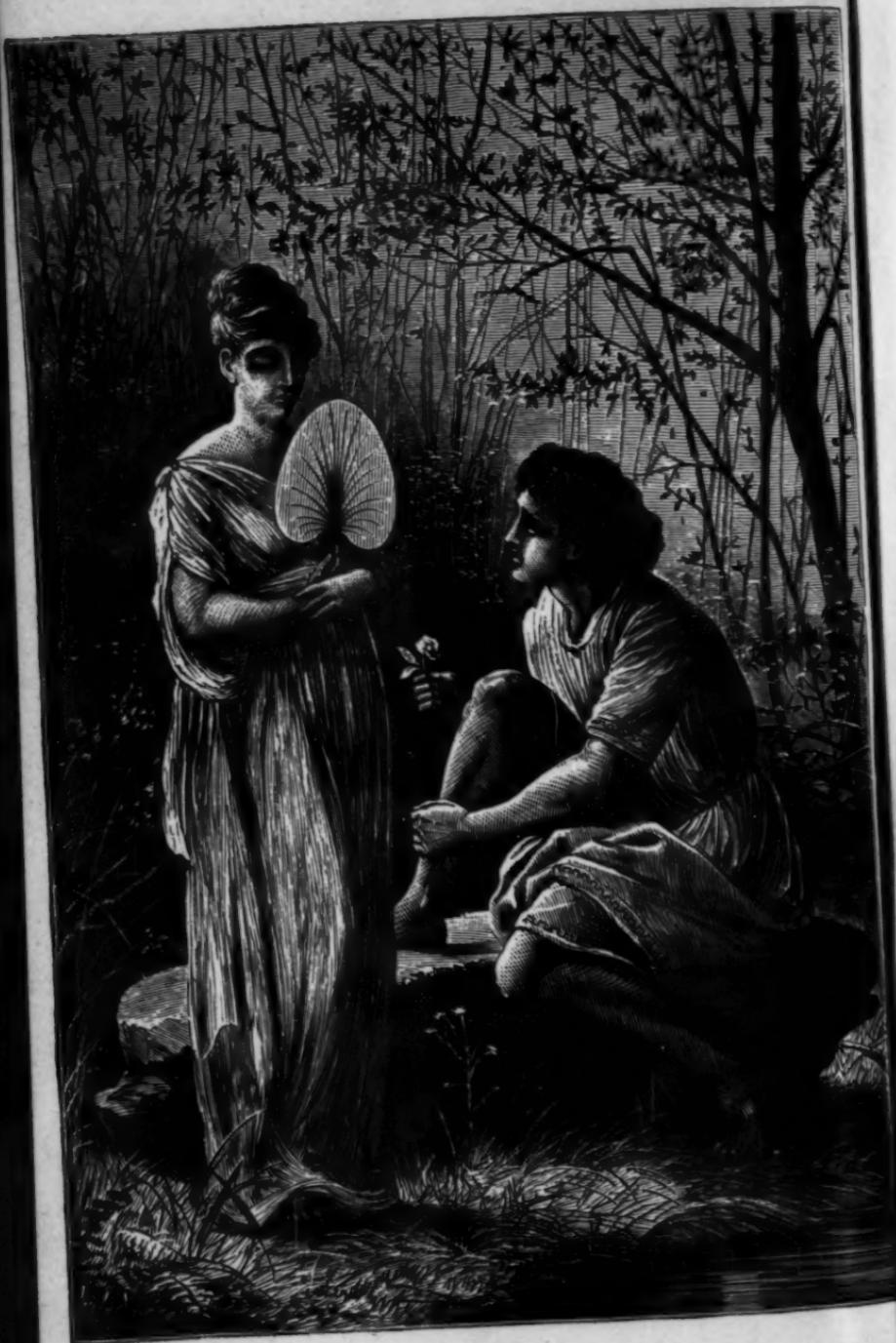
' He loves me—loves me not ! Ah, me !
What if she finds ' he loves me not ?'
From silken chains the bird flies free—
Chains forged upon this very spot.
A sudden darkness fills the air,
The summer leaves take autumn tone ;
Ah, cruel floweret, could you dare
To whisper he was not her own ?

' He loves me—loves me not ! And now
The presage of the petal brings
Carnation hues to cheek and brow ;
' Ah, who so fortunate ?' she sings ;
' He loves me ; and if he prove true,
As I shall prove through all the years,
Fair flower, I shall remember you
With guerdon of my happy tears.'

' He loves me—loves me not ! For aye
The ancient oracles are fled,
No Delphic priestess speaks to-day ;
And all the waves wail'd, ' Pan is dead !'
But still the flower, whose petals fall
Like wayward snow-flakes at her feet,
Hath power to answer at her call—
And that contents thee, Marguerite !

H. SAVILE CLARKE.





A LOVE-DUET.

See Sappho and Phaon.

LONDON SOCIETY.

AUGUST 1870.

QUEEN SCARBOROUGH.



If the impudent holiday-makers will be content with one answer that comes to his master, his faith becomes the publick's also; and then our railway and steamship surely sinister than all other breakfast-tables, will stand no solution so truly a monstrosity. Every railway nowdays has a watering-place, for which it claims the distinction. The hotel-keeper owns the supremacy of the tugs, the Chatlins and the long waves between Margate and Dover, the Great Western goes to Newquay, and the South Western pumps for Ryde. The Southerner would like to point to Llandudno, but North Wales is hardly accessible enough as yet. But the fact is that the great British publick, among all these interested persuasions, resolves that this something shall be elective or nothing, and chooses its own queen. Ask a Londoner (or say Southerner) whose sway he acknowledges, and he will, as a rule, declare boldly for Queen Brighton. Ask a North-countryman, manufacturing or agricultural, peer or workman, and with the same unhesitatingly he will declare his allegiance to Queen Scarborough. To

wavers between Margate and Dover, the Great Western goes to Newquay, and the South Western pumps for Ryde. The Southerner would like to point to Llandudno, but North Wales is hardly accessible enough as yet. But the fact is that the great British publick, among all these interested persuasions, resolves that this something shall be elective or nothing, and chooses its own queen. Ask a Londoner (or say Southerner) whose sway he acknowledges, and he will, as a rule, declare boldly for Queen Brighton. Ask a North-countryman, manufacturing or agricultural, peer or workman, and with the same un-